

TRANSFORMATIVE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGH
POSTCOLONIAL AND NARRATIVE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES,
WITH EGALITARIAN KOREAN CHURCHES AS THE FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

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Miseon Choi

Our society today is about the society of “inter-.” With the development of the fourth industry, we can quickly access news from all over the world through the internet network, and we can travel to other countries whenever we want. This suggests that everyone is connected as one, not as disconnected countries. In addition, there is no philosophy or idea that exists alone, and the values inherent in culture and religion are closely linked to each other. In other words, we are living in an era of inter-racial, inter-cultural, and inter-religious.

However, one cannot help but ask how much the lives of modern people living in inter-racial, inter-cultural, and inter-religious times respect each other’s differences and specialties. Because we are still plagued by the so-called ‘~ism’ in many parts of the world such as racism, sexism, classism, capitalism, imperialism, and white centralism (supremacy).

In this situation, those who have the hegemony are mass-producing political, institutional, religious, ideological, and structural standards to maintain their world, and define those who are different from them as the “other” based on their own standard. In the end, those who are defined as the “other” are pushed out of the boundaries set by the hegemonists and are isolated and subordinated within social structure and ideology. For example, white people subjugate non-white people in racism, men subjugate women in sexism, upper classes subjugate lower classes

in classism, rich people subjugate poor people in capitalism, and dominators subjugate subordinates in imperialism – with their social position and power. Furthermore, the inherent attributes of the subordinated are corrupted and distorted by the structural, cultural, and religious ideologies organized by the dominant. Herein lies the bigger problem that not only the problems of “othering” of hegemonists but also those on the so-called marginalized internalizes the “othering,” adapt to and even reproduce that ideology.

For instance, as I am a married Korean Christian woman, temporarily a single mom who is an international student in the United States, and in particular a pastor’s wife and at the same time a female pastor at a Korean church, my relationships and most of the expectations about me start from my role and responsibility as a woman. This has drawn me to deeply think about who I really am. That is, am I the one who was created by religious and cultural ideologies? Or am I the one who was created by social oppression and the system? Or, in contrast, am I the one who has a firm identity as God’s daughter? As I feel the relationships and responsibilities surrounding me all over in terms of gender and role, I realized that a person named “I” should not be restricted to any role or gender, nor be bound by social structure or cultural ideology because it is not truly who I am. Instead, I should have a full identity as “I” who is a daughter of God. Furthermore, we need to critically think that who is defined and labeled me as "Asian" and "woman," who is forced me to stay on this boundary, and who keeps those boundaries.

Therefore, this dissertation is intended to examine why identity as a child of God is important and to explore the possibility of transformative Christian education for this identity. For this, postcolonial feminist perspective will be used to look at those who has lost their voices in patriarchal and hierarchical societies, especially women and Christianity as the center. It will

also seek the epistemological and life transformation of the marginalized people's internalized cultural and religious ideologies through narrative pedagogy.

In this regard, Chapter 1 will deal with the problem and methodology and outline each chapter while chapter 2 will look at a brief history of how women generally were treated within the patriarchal and hierarchical culture of Christianity and particularly in Korea. Chapter 3 will re-examine the situation of women and traditional biblical perspectives from the postcolonial feminist theological point of view. Chapter 4 will look at the possibilities of how narratives can liberate internalized ideologies of classism, imperialism, and patriarchy. Through introducing three particular egalitarian churches in Korea, Chapter 5 will discuss how to live as a child of God beyond the class, imperial, and patriarchal ideologies, as well as how to establish self-identity as God's child through narrative. Finally, chapter 6 will conclude and make suggestions on how a transformative Christian education is possible through postcolonial feminist and narrative pedagogical perspectives.

KEYWORDS: Postcolonial Theology, Narrative Pedagogy, Deconstructing Worldly Ideology, Epistemological Transformation, Embodiment of Loving Life

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Presentation of Study

There was a television show titled *Daughter-in-Law in Wonderland* that aired in Korea a few years ago. As the show examines the daily activities of some families, it attempts to criticize sexist family culture. The show became both controversial and sensational because it drew sympathy for the struggles of married Korean women. One of the cast members had to set the table for her father and mother-in-law at her in-laws' house without the assistance of her husband despite her near giving birth. In addition to caring for her first son, she had to cook for her parents-in-law. Instead of assisting her, her husband went out to meet his friends.

In another instance, a cast member prepared a meal for her father-in-law's first birthday after getting married. She asked her mother for assistance in preparing the birthday meal since she was in the early stages of her pregnancy. Her mother agreed to help. Her mother prepared the meal with a lot of effort and was only concerned with her daughter's health and not the gender inequality in the situation. She attempted to go out before her daughter's in-laws arrived home in order to have her in-laws believe that her daughter had done all the work.

It was not a simple scene, but the scene clearly conveys a very important aspect of Korean family culture that parents with daughters are supposed to act as servants to their in-laws, while the son-in-law should be treated as a '100-year guest.' It refers to an old Confucian saying that means the son-in-law should be treated as a guest for 100 years while the wife should be treated as a normal member of the husband's family and should not receive any special treatment. In short, the daughter-in-law serves as the family's laborer.

The purpose of the TV series is to reveal the social condition that leads married women to act in the way Korean cultural ideology desires. In the past, people usually regarded a conflict between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law as a “women’s conflict.” Since it was just between them and no one else should get involved, the conflict had no bearing on larger social concerns. However, the show implicitly critiques this perspective by demonstrating how Korean culture as a whole and a negative attitude toward women are major causes of the conflict. In Korea, the fact that this TV show is broadcast shows the progress that has already been made in women’s rights. Furthermore, it shows how much work remains to be done in this area and that Korean culture has reached a crossroads. This has nothing to do with why the movie, *Kim Ji-young Born in 1982* (2019), has incited controversy regarding gender roles and become a social issue.

A small movement has arisen within the Korean church today in response to the growing interest in gender roles and feminism within Korean society. That is, interpret the Bible from the perspective of Korean women, rebuild church education, and empower women who need comfort. In spite of this, it is difficult to bring up the subject of feminism or gender roles within the Korean church. In fact, most traditional Korean churches view feminism in a far more negative light than society does. Even if the church accepts feminism, feminism outside of certain standards is viewed as the main enemy that destroys churches and families.

In this regard, a forum was recently held in Korea on “Femi Talk of Church Sisters: Can Church and Feminism Coexist?” hosted by the Christian Academy and Seoul YMCA on December 12, 2019. According to Juah Lee, one of four female theologians on the panel, “It is not easy to expect a change in the church just because some people interpret the Bible differently. In addition, we must also examine structural issues within the church. We must pay

attention to and shed light on the cultural structure that fosters gender discrimination. It would be beneficial to pay attention to what the church teaches and does not teach.”¹

I thoroughly empathized with this issue, as I am a Korean Christian married woman, a temporary single mom who is an international student abroad in the United States, and a Korean pastor’s wife and a female pastor at the same time. Most of the expectations of me and my relationships stem from my role and responsibilities as a woman. These expectations have prompted me to reflect deeply on who I truly am. To be more specific, am I the one who was created by religious and cultural ideologies? Or am I the one who has been created by social oppression and the system? Or, on the contrary, am I the one who clearly identifies as God’s daughter? As I feel the relationships and responsibilities surrounding me all over in terms of gender and role, I realized that a person named “I” should not be restricted to any role or gender, nor be bound by social structure or cultural ideology because it is not truly who I am. Instead, I should have a full identity as “I” who is a daughter of God.²

At the same time, I would be careful about the classification of gender - man and woman. This is because a typical image of the woman is based on male-centered ideologies, and too much emphasis on “sisterhood” would result in the abandonment of gender diversity. As Judith Butler reminds us, we should be cautious when talking about depictions of victimized women since their origins derive from a male-centered ideology. Thus, instead of considering men and

¹ Eunhye Lee, “나도 살리고 너도 살리는 기독교 페미니즘” [Christian feminism that helps you and I come alive], *News & Joy*, December 13, 2019, <http://www.newsnjoy.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=226024>.

² For me, to be a daughter of God means to follow Jesus as indicated in the verses, “Love your God; love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:28-34; and Luke 10:25-28). In this sense, having my identity as myself means I cannot be suppressed or harmed by any form of oppression and structure, whether religious, cultural, or social.

women as a comparison, the structure itself needs to be re-examined and modified.³ Considering this, I would like to reflect on what identity as a Christian should be beyond cultural, religious, and gender ideologies from a postcolonial perspective. Moreover, I would like to emphasize that this dissertation is not just for women and does not only focus on their alienation. Even though this dissertation addresses women as examples of those who can be easily alienated and ignored in our society, its ultimate purpose is that we as members of this society should live together as equal children of God. For this purpose, I will apply postcolonial theology and narrative pedagogy.

B. Thesis and Discussion

1. Why Is It Important to Have a Firm Identity as God's Children?

In order to pursue transformative religious education, we must first identify and understand who we are. The reason is that transformation begins with a deep understanding of oneself. In order to comprehend our identity as Christians, I first examined Jesus' life as described in the gospels. After Jesus was baptized, a voice sounded from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; I am well pleased with you" (Mark 1:11, NRSV). In this moment, he first realized his true identity as the Son of God. In other words, he voluntarily decided to be baptized and began his life as Christ (*χριστός* (*chrīstós*)), which means "anointed one."

After this, he dedicated his entire life to loving God and loving other people. Other words, Jesus as the Son of God, that is, his firm identity, practiced and actualized "love" with socially and culturally marginalized people. As a result of this event, not only Jesus but also the people around him have been affected and their lives have been changed. Therefore, I believe

³ Ellen T. Armour and Susan M. St. Ville, *Bodily Citations: Religion and Judith Butler* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 1-12.

transformative religious education is possible when Christians realize they are children of God like Jesus. That is because a change of perception is necessary in order to change our lives. Indeed, a change of perception and values will result in a change in our lives.

2. The Postcolonial Feminist and Narrative Pedagogical Lens for Transformation

Postcolonial feminist theology tries to interpret and critique social and cultural structure for liberating people who are in boundaries. Some postcolonial feminist theologians point out that most academic resources are written by and from men's perspective and based on their experiences. In other words, male-dominated references were the only sources that we can refer to for academia, and biblical interpretations are based on patriarchal, normative, and hierarchal resources. In that situation, women are under double and triple pressure caused by male-dominated religion, culture, and academics. In addition, although most of the postcolonial feminist theologians recognize these problems and there is some literature on postcolonial feminist theology, postcolonial feminism does not develop the narrative pedagogical dimension for marginalized people such as women.

Additionally, there are a few narrative treatments of African American or white women such as Anne Wimberly and Dori Baker, but they have not been adapted to the Korean context. Furthermore, narrative pedagogy is a relatively new concept in Korean religious education. As such, I would like to develop an approach to discovering our true identity as God's children and how we are to live with this identity by incorporating the work I have done and offering pedagogical suggestions. It is hoped that such religious education will liberate marginalized individuals. Specifically, I believe narrative pedagogy can facilitate healing and transformation for people who are oppressed by religious, cultural, and social ideologies. Through the process of narrative pedagogy, marginalized people will realize what social and cultural ideologies have

suppressed within their minds and learn how to transform the relationship between themselves and others in good health.

Furthermore, I will use a postcolonial feminist perspective to revisit Jesus' stories and establish narrative pedagogy to demonstrate how transformative religious education is possible even for Christians who have strong patriarchal and hierarchical ideologies.⁴ I believe that the postcolonial feminist lens enables Christians to reconstruct patriarchal and hierarchical structures of understanding the Bible and church structures using a postcolonial feminist perspective.

In terms of narrative, Wimberly suggests that stories frame the everyday lives of humans and help individuals possess “liberating wisdom and hope-building vocations.”⁵ Also, religious educator Thomas Groome mentions that “to be a person is to live in a story; and sharing our stories helps us appreciate ourselves as agent-subjects in history.”⁶ In this manner, narrative pedagogy for hierarchical-centered Christians is likely to enable them to bring forth life-giving and healing in their capacity as agent-subjects. Furthermore, working with them will empower others - those who have internalized strong religious and cultural ideologies that stand in the way of realizing their identity as God’s children - while they liberate themselves first. The reason for this is that narrative pedagogy allows both women and men or oppressor and oppressed to recognize and question what oppresses them in their shared stories and why.

⁴ Refer to HyeRan Kim-Cragg, *Story and Song: A Postcolonial Interplay Between Christian Education and Worship* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012); HyeRan Kim-Cragg and Eun-Young Choi, *The Encounters: Retelling the Bible from Migration and Intercultural Perspectives* (ChungNam: Daejanggan Publisher, 2014); and Heungsoon Park, *Postcolonial Interpretation of the Bible* (Seoul: Yeyoung B&P, 2006).

⁵ Anne Wimberly, *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), xi.

⁶ Wimberly, 3.

Particularly, I will introduce and observe a few churches in Korea. Among many other conservative and traditional Korean churches, which have strong patriarchal and hierarchical ideologies, I found a few churches that are Yega, Jeonju Saenuri, and Hongdae Young People churches. Although they did not study postcolonial feminist theology or narrative pedagogy academically, I found that they already practice the values of those academic works in their individual and communal lives. Especially, I realized that they have a firm identity as God's children and have practiced the completed commandment 'love' in their individual and communal lives. I believe that lives that try to connect their identity as God's children and Jesus' love, which is embodied in their actual life, will be a good example for many traditional Korean Christians today and other Christians in the broader world.

Therefore, as a good example, I would like to observe and discern what they do pedagogically that is transformational and to analyze it through postcolonial feminist and narrative pedagogical lenses for those who are eager to transform and liberate individuals and communal lives. I believe these particular churches' individual and communal life will be facilitating transformative religious education in Korea and more places; where still culturally and religiously hierarchical system exists and where exists people those who oppressed and are suffered by it. Transformative religious educational research and application for the liberation of hierarchical-centered Christians will provide new perspectives on how to see the binary structures in between Western/non-Western, subject-being/object, intellectuals/laborer, and power/no-power, as well as the religious and gender issues. I hope this study would be a cornerstone of this.

3. A Summary of the Argument

In here, chapter I, I address the presentation of the study, the importance of the problem, thesis and discussion, explanation of methods, scope and limitations, and chapter outlines.

Chapter II will explore a brief history of how women were treated in general. The reason why women are the center of the chapter 2 is that historically, male-dominated society oppressed women as objects, and even “women become viewed as an extension of the male slaves.”⁷ From this point of view, Christianity is no exception. Christianity is a predominately patriarchal religion where even God is male. In this regard, chapter II will be addressing the academic problem and patriarchal and hierarchal culture, particularly, the context of oppressed Korean women.

Chapter III will argue about postcolonial feminist theology and critique cultural influences women. Through exploring postcolonial feminist theology, hierarchical-centered Christians will be aware of what kind of ideologies affect themselves and will promote life-giving experience in their everyday lives that bring about a transformation of self, community, and governance structures.

This chapter also will revisit Jesus’ stories that are described in the Gospel from a postcolonial feminist perspective. As reinterpreting patriarchal, hierarchal, traditional biblical interpretation, I will explore a new vision toward a loving life that Jesus practiced and realized in his entire life. This process will be a very important foundation for realizing identity as God’s Children.

⁷ Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *Embracing the Other: The Transformative Spirit of Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 84.

In chapter IV, narrative pedagogy as a fundamental methodology that practices reconciliation between theory and lived experience and empowers marginalized people to reclaim their voices. Particularly, I will explore some essential dimensions of narrative pedagogy that religious education has incorporated and adapted its insights and will identify the possibilities that narrative has for the empowerment of marginalized people's self-agency.

Chapter V will introduce three churches – Yega, Jeonju Saenuri, and Hongdae Young People – in Korea as a good example for hierarchical-centered Christians today. I will firstly introduce the pedagogy that they practice. Secondly, I will observe and interview their individual and communal life how they understand their identity as God's children and how they practice love in their lives. Third, I will interpret and analyze their pedagogy through a postcolonial feminist and narrative perspective. Fourth, I will reflect on the weaknesses, strengths of the curriculum, and its particularity. And last, I will offer pedagogical suggestions in light of both the literature and community research. Finally, chapter VI will conclude with a summary of my dissertation.

C. A Description of the Research Methods

Based on Richard Osmer's four tasks of practical theology, a qualitative research method was used for my dissertation.⁸ In particular, in accordance with John W. Creswell, a case study approach used because this dissertation includes description, particular themes or issues, and is then examined by analysis.⁹ Through a case study of the three Korean churches, I acquired a

⁸ Richard Osmer's four tasks of practical theology include these questions: (1) the descriptive-empirical task: "What is going on?"; (2) the interpretive task: "Why is it going on?"; (3) the normative task: "What ought to be going on?"; and (4) the pragmatic task: "How might we respond?" Refer to Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2012), 97-102.

deep understanding of how they understand the meaning of God's children and why they practice a christ's life in their individual and communal life.¹⁰

I first introduced three Korean churches' (Yega, Jeonju Saenuri, and Hongdae Young People) particular pedagogy that they practice in their individual and communal life. Secondly, I then observed and interviewed them. Third, I analyzed observations and interviews through the postcolonial feminist and narrative perspective. Data collected through interviewing three members of each church that were both women and men and pastors and laypersons to explore their experiences, opinions, and emotions about Korean Christianity, Korean traditional cultures, how they practice some pedagogy for their individual and communal life, and how the pedagogy effects on them.

The interview conducted after exploring their particular pedagogy, and then I analyzed and interpreted the data to find meaning from them. Some ethical issues might arise in the interview process. Thus, I used consent forms in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants. I asked the participants their preferences for assumed names before I transcribe the interviews. All the data were recorded and stored on my personal laptop with password protection. For more detailed information about this, I attached the approved IRB (Institutional Review Board) protocol in the appendix.

D. A Statement of the Audience, Scope, and Limitations

The issue of this dissertation is to pay attention to the people who are struggled with religious and cultural ideology. As the study focuses on both the voices of the people who are marginalized and the people (assumed with power), it seeks reconciliation to facilitate

¹⁰ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 98.

understanding to make a better community, a better society, and a better world. Everyone can be strong and can be weak depending on the situation and their positions. Therefore, the research will be a cornerstone for everyone to think about how we can liberate ourselves from internalized religious and cultural ideologies; furthermore, it will be an opportunity to think about how we can create a nonviolent peace with the next person. The way for the marginalized to truly regain their voices will be possible not only when they themselves speak out, but also when the strong themselves are conscious of the issue and tries to make changes in a family, a small community, and a social level. Therefore, the research invites all people, but especially, it empowers the marginalized and voiceless people that are caused by religious and cultural ideologies. Especially, by exploring and studying the three particular Korean churches that try to overcome religious and cultural ideologies by practicing true love, we will be able to find one of the good ways to ponder what direction today's faith community should go.

My research opens to all people who are strong and weak to persuade reconciliation and to promote liberation from religious and cultural ideologies that oppress marginalized people. However, there will be several limitations since the research will be based on only Christian tradition, more specifically, the hierarchical-centered Christian context. Restrictions focused on Korean Christian examples probably have limitations that exclude different ethnic groups and other religions. In addition, as I will also be dealing with the research from my Korean perspective and Korean context whether intentional or unintentional, this will be another limitation. Finally, the participants of this dissertation will be Korean Christians ages between the 20s through 60s; thus, depending on their generation, influences of religious and cultural ideologies may vary. This limitation can exclude other generations and their particular experiences, thoughts, feelings, and contexts.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT OF OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IN GENERAL AND KOREAN WOMEN IN PARTICULAR

Until I began theological study, especially a postcolonial feminist study, I never considered gender dynamics and power issues in relation to academic knowledge and interpretation of the bible. I naturally thought of male-centered and hierarchical thinking and naturally accepted the traditional women and men's images. If I or someone else did not practice or live in accordance with the traditional gender image, I judged their behavior in my mind, and sometimes I felt guilty about my behavior. This might be because of my previous education within the Korean culture and/or I grew up thinking from the patriarchal normative standard. Ironically, although sometimes I felt my position as a daughter, a daughter-in-law, and a female pastor is unfair, I tried to fulfill my responsibility as a woman. Indeed, I wonder if I was really "me" back then? Was not that I who was trying to fulfill someone's standards and to satisfy the role demanded by society?

When I first noticed that most academic resources are written by and from men's perspective and based on their experiences, I was embarrassed. I could not believe that the basis of public education that I learned as an absolute standard for social life is male-centered. I found that male-dominated references were the only sources that most people can refer to for academia and that biblical interpretation is also based on patriarchal, normative, and hierarchal resources. In this regard, I realized that religious and cultural traditions were only male-centered when in truth this patriarchal, normative, and literature were supporting and complementing this

normative and patriarchal overview. Therefore, I would like to explore and discuss how culture and religion played a role in suppressing women, what is their ideology, how the church and its education have strengthened this ideology, and particularly where is Korean women's places in Korean culture and Christian church.

A. Women as the Other

From century to century and from nation to nation, women have experienced alienation, subordination, and abjection to various degrees. "Women's subordination has a long history and is reinforced through various social and cultural aspects in many cultures and communities around the world."¹ Its history dates back to the Aristotle era. Aristotle understands that man is "better and more divine"² while the woman is the only object. For Aristotle, men are physically, mentally, and spiritually above women, and men are even like heavenly beings. In Aristotle's world, fathers have the ultimate authority as a master or lord, and mothers should be subordinated to men. Wives cannot act first on their own, only react to their husbands' actions. Although the particular cultural manifestation is different, the patriarchal structure is no different from Aristotle's world. Man takes control of woman. Women lost their power and furthermore became the property of men. Male-dominated society oppressed women as objects, and even "women become viewed as an extension of the male slaves."³

Moreover, the source of this understanding of women's inferiority has been cemented by Aristotle's philosophy in the Western world and is clearly suggesting that women are existential,

¹ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 79.

² Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 79.

³ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 84.

biologically immature, and inferior.⁴ The reason that Aristotle's words, "inequality in the relationship between women and men is eternal, men's courage comes from ordering, and women's courage comes from obedience,"⁵ sounds not awkward today thousands of years later is because it suggests the cognitive understanding of gender has still not changed fundamentally.

Furthermore, it has been understood that Western civilization is a dangerous force that brings evil, going further from the understanding that women are inferior, which has deeply dominated Western civilization. This is part of misogyny, an idea that can be found in most theologians, from Church Fathers theologians to the Middle Ages. In particular, misogynistic ideas were internalized in theologians of the Reformation. For instance, Tertullian understood women as the devil's gateway, and Martin Luther understood that women were created equal to men but became inferior after depravity. And Calvin still justifies and legalizes the inferiority and subordination of women by saying that women and men are equal from the beginning, but that it is in accordance with God's creative order that women are subordinate to men.⁶ In other words, understanding women as wicked women can be seen as keeping them within the patriarchal system, religious belief, and misogynistic biblical stories and controlling them.

In this regard, both men and women will not be free within these ideologies unless the church thoroughly breaks down its internalized misogynistic tradition, whether intentional or unintentionally. It is also required to reinterpret the meaning and doctrines of the Bible, and to reinterpret and re-conceptualize the Christian tradition in that it interferes with the performance of an equal position with the union of the church community.

⁴ Namsoon Kang, *페미니즘과 기독교* [Feminism and Christianity] (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1998), 31.

⁵ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 32.

⁶ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 86-87.

1. Christianity and the Ideology of the Domination

In fact, religions take a role to make clear distinctions between ‘I’ and ‘you’ and ‘us’ and ‘them.’ For instance, the caste system and tradition in India is a prime example. There is not only division in India between various religions such as Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and Sikhs, but also separation from other groups within the Hindu religion itself. Moreover, what we should note is that religion has offered theoretically justify the social hierarchies that are a strategy to organize the life of communities within a given culture. And there are women, especially women of color, at the very bottom of the hierarchy.⁷

From this point of view, Christianity is no exception. “Christianity has contributed much to society in affecting, modifying, and adapting cultural norms, behaviors, and understandings.”⁸ This can be clearly seen by how Christians have harmed and destroyed Native Americans. Christians took away Native American land and forced White Western European culture and religion on them. Christianity, which became the official religion, has penetrated into people’s consciousness as a spirit beyond space and implies the extermination of those who strive or are subordinate to the conversion of non-religious people or people who have other religions. We have witnessed this phenomenon in many nations around the world where genocide occurs in the name of Christianity.

In this regard, Robert Allen Warrior points out that the Exodus story is not a liberation story but a conquest and genocide story.⁹ In the story of Exodus, God delivers one group of

⁷ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 59-60.

⁸ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 70.

⁹ Robert Allen Warrior, “Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians,” in *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*, ed. James Treat (New York: Routledge, 1996), 97-98.

people from Egypt but ignores those being subordinated, alienated, and killed. Although conquering and repossessing land story of the Israelites is the survived message for them, it also has a harmful and damaging side that dominated the ‘Others.’ If we Christians continue to perpetuate this concept of a delivering God, this kind of tragedy will not be stopped.

Particularly, Grace Ji-Sun Kim identifies that “this concept of delivering God has had negative effects on women, for it views women as objects of conquest accomplished physically, mentally, psychologically, and sexually.”¹⁰ Within this conquering image of God, women are subordinated and alienated. Besides, Christian religious fundamentalism treats women as subordinate to men and defines the norms of female behavior that perpetuate subordination and inferiority.¹¹ Through this kind of perpetuating process, Christianity accomplished not only conquering the world but also defining the reality of other peoples in the world.¹² Therefore, this kind of damaging image of God must be reexamined, reevaluated, and ultimately replaced because God’s nature is love and welcoming all humanity.

At the same time, the previously discussed misogyny, which understands women as subordinate beings and even as wicked women, and the Christian conqueror ideology are based on the logic of domination. The logic of domination dates back to the European colonial period. At this time, new hierarchies developed in European colonies, and Christopher Columbus took the lead as a pioneer of Spanish colonialism in the Americas, finding a new path to India, and eventually discovering a new world in the Americas. The indigenous people in the new land

¹⁰ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 71.

¹¹ Kwok Pui-lan, “Introduction,” in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women’s Theology*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013), 6.

¹² William R. Hutchison, “A Moral Equivalent for Imperialism: Americans and the Promotion of Christian Civilization, 1880-1910,” in *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880-1920*, ed. Torben Christensen and William R Hutchison (Copenhagen: Aros, 1982), 172.

were named as Indians by the dominator, and enslaved Africans who began to be shipped into the Americas were racialized as black. In other words, racial production has begun in a new world. Within this racial hierarchy, Native Americans and African Americans were subordinated and considered subhuman beings while the Christian white men were considered as ideal beings for all humankind. In this new racial hierarchy, women, particularly women of color, were on the bottom of it.¹³

As William R. Hutchison criticizes, “Christianity as it existed in the West had a right not only to conquer the world but to define reality for the people of the world,”¹⁴ clearly identifies that much of the white European ideology was actually about the ideology of the colonizers beyond the Christianity itself. We have witnessed this very often throughout history, and it seems quite difficult to differentiate Christianity and the colonizer’s ideology since religion and culture are complicatedly mixed with one another. Nevertheless, it is self-evident that white supremacy and imperialism have dominated Western thought, and it is also a firm foundation of Christianity.

Above all, we will need to note that the Bible includes imperial ideas. Particularly, the New Testament reflects the imperial power of the Roman Empire and Christianity evangelizes over different people and places as they legitimize the ideologies of sexism, racism, classism, colonialism, slavery, and homophobia after becoming the official religion. Indeed, the bible has been authorizing to subjugate of foreign nations and lands, and its contents are from domination and colonialism of different people. Especially, as the New Testament emerged from imperial

¹³ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 59-60.

¹⁴ Hutchison, “A Moral Equivalent for Imperialism: Americans and the Promotion of Christian Civilization, 1880-1910,” 172.

ideology, it has become a postcolonial book. Furthermore, the bible embodies the perception that colonized people are perfectly right to dominate others by describing them as helpless, evil, lazy, backward, and in need of education. In other words, this imaging perception is what makes colonialism a tool to help them. On the contrary, colonizers are described as civilized, Christian, literate, and articulate, which justifies the domination of other people.¹⁵

As Namsoon Kang argues, “The residue of colonialism strongly influences the construction of theological discourses and praxes, education, language, culture, geopolitics, and economy, and so forth,”¹⁶ it is a self-evident fact that religious education is also a colonizing discourse, more precisely Western-centered education. Indeed, “The academic study of religion has often failed to acknowledge what it is. It is academic; it is Western; it is intellectual.”¹⁷ In other words, the imperial and westernized ideology has become normative throughout all kinds of knowledge, culture, and religion. The imperial, white-centered, and hierarchal value consciously and unconsciously has internalized people’s thoughts and has affected their way of life.

The more serious problem is that the image of God has not only a problem of gender but also a problem of race. In Christian history, indeed, people have recognized God not only as male but also as white. Particularly, a male image such as Father, Lord, King, or White conveys the Christian theological construction of God, which is the colonial image of an Emperor that has

¹⁵ Musa Dube, “Toward a Post-Colonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible,” in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women’s Theology*, ed., Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 92-93.

¹⁶ Namsoon Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology: Asia and Theopolitical Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 111.

¹⁷ Sam Gill, “The Academic Study of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62 (Winter 1994): 967.

absolute power. As some Christian theologians and practitioners use the male image of God as a divine figure for men's superiority over women,¹⁸ they reinforce imperial, male-centered, and a hierarchy in religion. In this regard, we must be alert that "The perception of God as male, white, and King is too easily compatible with sexism, racism, and imperialism, which has formed a conceptual framework of Christian colonial mentality of various types."¹⁹

To move toward decolonization of the perception of Christian imperial theology, we should first eliminate the dominant Eurocentric Christianity for liberating Westernized and dominated theology. We must be aware of this kind of legitimated imperial ideology and dichotomy such as dominator/dominated, power/powerless, men/women, rich/poor, and white/people of color that still influence today's Christians and their way of thinking. We also should resist the exploitation of imperialism. We should seek new ways of liberating ourselves from internalized imperial and westernized ideology in our multicultural and postcolonial world.²⁰

As we continue to carefully analyze and read the bible, we should recognize the colonial hidden agenda and should unearth and expose to "what remains of the 'First World' world, which still insists that it is good to colonize and dominate others."²¹ We must question, "how they [dominators] have justified, perpetuated, and sacralized the oppressions through their theologies, doctrines, and institutional systems, and how power can complicate religion."²² In particular, it should be remembered that colonialism has subordinated many people but

¹⁸ Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 115.

¹⁹ Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 117.

²⁰ Dube, "Toward a Post-Colonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible," 98.

²¹ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 75-76.

²² Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 120.

especially women. Unless we stop subordinating others, it will be impossible to treat others fairly and equally.

2. Patriarchal Ideology in Christianity

Christianity is a predominately patriarchal religion where even God is male. The Christian tradition implies male-centeredness, patriarchies, and misogyny. These negative factors have spread throughout Christianity and Western culture; especially male-centeredness is considered the greatest evil. Because male-centeredness is a value that only men can possess all dignity, virtue, and power and regards it is legitimate to treat women as inferior and defective dependent human beings or the others. As long as Christianity centers on the symbolic system of 'father/son' and values the use of it as a Christian theology and practice, Christianity will hardly escape criticism for being male-centered religion.²³ It is because these male-centered ideologies make men a normative human being, so that the normative image of God, the church tradition, and further the practical faith life becomes men-centered while making women subordinate and incidental beings. Mary Daly's comment that "If God is male, then the male is God"²⁴ truly shows how much a male-centered understanding of God affects Christianity.

Although the patriarchal system is based on the governance style by biological sex, it actually implies the whole structure of a society dominated by fathers, men. In other words, all kinds of domination and subordination - master and slave, king and servant, colonial and colonial - are the foundations of the patriarchal system, and are operated by the logic of domination. This male-centered ruling and governing ideology have been shown as deep-rooted misogyny in the

²³ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 73.

²⁴ Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 19.

Christian tradition. The idea of misogyny has not only suppressed the role of women as God's people, femininity has been equated with sin in biblical and church history. As Augustine equated masculinity with the image of God and Thomas Aquinas identified women as 'wrong men,' misogyny has internalized into the people's thoughts in a long history.

At the same time, Namsoon Kang critically points out the process of internalization that makes women take the patriarchal rule and unequal structure for granted beyond the simple confrontation between men as perpetrators and women as victims. In other words, it is the question of how the dominator can obtain voluntary consent from the subjugated people by manipulating and creating the belief system or value structure, and through the voluntary consent, the subjugated justifies and maintains the oppressive situation. In this manner, the subjugated are not only fails to recognize that they are being suppressed but rather accepts the power of the dominator as it is and voluntarily contributes to the reproduction of the governance structure.²⁵

Particularly, Kang articulates how a representative Christian virtue, obedience, takes a role within the patriarchal Christian tradition. Obedience as a Christian virtue is to obey to God, God's will, and God's righteousness. Obedience is the promise to the commandment that follows what Jesus accomplished and fulfilled throughout his life, which is the life of true love to the Others. However, obedience within the patriarchal system has lost much of its meaning. In the patriarchal system, obedience internalized women with the best virtues such as gentleness and humility, obedience and self-sacrifice, and even love of self-denial, and strengthened the

²⁵ Namsoon Kang, *페미니스트 신학: 여성, 영성, 생명* [Feminist Theology: Gender, Spirituality, Life] (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 2002), 293-94.

internalization of so-called ‘feminine’ submissive and passive attitudes. Furthermore, obedience emphasizes subordination as a virtue of women to the patriarchal authority that leads to father-husband-son.²⁶

The most important factor in maintaining the patriarchal system is the ‘dependence and obedience’ of women to men. The role of women in patriarchal churches is submissive in assisting and supporting men. Only when women are faithful to this role, they are praised as an indispensable ‘important’ person. If then, how can women survive within these patriarchal ideologies? Will a woman be a conspirator who fully conforms to the patriarchal system and reproduces it? Or will a woman take the risk of being completely alienated from the patriarchal system? Regrettably, we have seen and experienced to this day, many women were forced to comply thoroughly with patriarchal demands, which was the only ‘survival’ for women.²⁷

At the same time, Grace Ji-Sun Kim criticizes Christianity, a patriarchal religion, as “a unique way to keep women in their place and make them the Other.”²⁸ She insists that patriarchal Christianity must be challenged because Christian patriarchal perceptions perpetuate negative images of women and can also be applied to women of different races. Especially, unless we reshape those patriarchal and westernized ideologies, we cannot avoid perpetuating racism, prejudice, and subordination of non-white people.

Therefore, within Christian patriarchal ideology, women need to recognize what makes them to be subordinated, silenced, and alienated. As Toril Moi said, “What is repressed is not

²⁶ Kang, *Feminist Theology*, 295-98.

²⁷ Kang, *Feminist Theology*, 301-02.

²⁸ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 85.

otherness, but specific, historically constructed agents,”²⁹ it is because patriarchal and westernized ideologies damage to women’s personal, social, cultural, and spiritual growth. By eliminating this harmful and damaging mentality, women would find their silenced voices and can live out in their true identity out of the image that has given from the dominator’s perspective.

3. Violence Against Women

a. Cultural Violence

Culture means the customs, attitudes, and worldviews practiced consciously or unconsciously by a society. Customs conducted from tradition and by the force of habit, they become standard and part of the natural order. Whoever deviates from tradition is condemned and punished for breaking the rules. Besides, if two different cultures have mixed, greater value can have more prestige over another culture. For this reason, Elsa Tamez criticizes that violence against women should be analyzed not only within its own culture but also “in relation to the foreign patriarchal imposition of other cultures.”³⁰ It is because the culture has legitimized the power of men over women. Even this has reinforced the violence of the dominator against the subordinate. “This violence, in turn, doubled when one culture dominates another.”³¹

There are three main ways how the majority of cultures are used as a tool of violence against women. Firstly, the culture reinforces dominant patterns of behavior and social system. The patriarchal culture, in particular, strengthens men’s rights to control and oppress women and

²⁹ Toril Moi, “Feminism, Postmodernism and Style: Recent Feminist Criticism in the United States,” *Cultural Critique* 2 (Spring 1988): 12.

³⁰ Elsa Tames, “Cultural Violence Against Women in Latin America,” in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*, ed., Mary John Mananzan, Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Elsa Tamez, J. Shannon Clarkson, Mary C. Grey, and Letty M. Russell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 13.

³¹ Tames, “Cultural Violence Against Women in Latin America,” 13.

legitimate sexual violence against women. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza understands patriarchy as kyriarchy (rule of the master/lord/husband) that “specifies women’s status in terms of class, race, country, or religion of the men to whom they belong.”³² In other words, each culture has a different aspect, but the patriarchal structures are the same. Second, if women placed in two different cultures, cultural oppression becomes twice. For instance, Korean women have experienced double oppression within the Confucian culture that emphasizes male-centered ideology and westernized Christian ideology. That is, culture and their religious customs combine to suppress women with double patriarchal forces. As Letty M. Russell articulates, “Both need to be resisted, and both need to be carefully studied in order to discover the truths and falsehoods they carry in regard to women’s dignity and full humanity.”³³ Finally, cultural violence allows cultural differences to be perceived as superior or inferior, instead of as diversity and abundance. In other words, “the differences are used as an excuse for domination by white Western culture and justification of economic and racial imperialism.”³⁴

b. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence should be understood from a social system and elite male power that continues to dominate over women and children including poverty that leads to dehumanization as well as events of physical violence. Domestic violence and misogyny are motivated by male violence and male monopoly control deeply rooted in Western culture, politics, and religious traditions for women and children. Particularly, understanding patriarchal families appear as

³² Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Ties that Bind: Domestic Violence Against Women,” in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*, ed. Mary John Mananzan et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 43.

³³ Letty M. Russell, “Spirituality, Struggle, and Cultural Violence,” in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*, ed. Mary John Mananzan et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 22.

³⁴ Russell, “Spirituality, Struggle, and Cultural Violence,” 23.

exclusive control over women and children. This exclusive control serves to maintain a dominant relationship while legitimating a sense of obedience and inferiority. The power and control of male heads of households are embodied through traditional families, and cultural and religious ideologies make women's obedient bodies and subservient awareness.³⁵

Most of all, Fiorenza criticizes that theological and religious discourse recalculates the social and cultural ideology of 'femininity,' and rebuilds and reinforces women's interior status rather than criticizing the sacrifices of women and children. Moreover, Christian theology overtly condemns the exploitation and sacrifice of repressive forms such as incest, sexual abuse, the murder of women, rape, but secretly advocates the patriarchal politics of obedience, unconditional forgiveness, the authority of men, subservience, self-sacrifice, and unquestioning surrender to God's will in the name of God and patriarchal practice.³⁶ It is indeed " 'Christian' family and church that jeopardize the survival of the women who struggle at the bottom of the socio-cultural and economic-political pyramid of domination."³⁷

c. Economic Violence

Discrimination and subordination to women continue not only in education, culture, and family but also in the economic structure. It has ideologically internalized women as inferior beings who have to rely on men, and socially excluded from economic activity. According to Ada María Isasi-Díaz, for example, racial and ethnic minority women in the U.S. are suffering economic violence in various ways.³⁸ She articulates "they live in situations where they are

³⁵ Fiorenza, "Ties that Bind: Domestic Violence Against Women," 42-43.

³⁶ Fiorenza, "Ties that Bind: Domestic Violence Against Women," 48-49.

³⁷ Fiorenza, "Ties that Bind: Domestic Violence Against Women," 49.

³⁸ Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "Economic Violence Against Minority Women in the USA," in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*, ed., Mary John Mananzan et al., (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 89.

abused or coerced by unfair remuneration of their labor, and situations in which, through physical or psychological means or through moral pressure, they are not allowed equal participation in the goods of society, whether those goods are natural or manufactured.”³⁹ In fact, the term minority means “unequal access to the sources of economic and political power in society,”⁴⁰ which refers status designation rather than numerical size. The most problematic thing is that this kind of segregation strengthens stratification to access to prestige, wealth, and power that results in a “structured system of exploitation and social discrimination.”⁴¹

Furthermore, Isasi-Díaz points out that the minority women are working in jobs that “yield less income, have less benefits, and provide less stability, [such as] agricultural labor, domestic service, and other kinds of work in the service sector.”⁴² It is because they are grouped as a minority in gender and race/ethnicity, and further, the primary sector of market labor is associated with white males of the dominant group.

According to Isasi-Díaz’s analysis, most Asian Americans work no less than ten hours a day, 6.5 days a week; many African American women are now working in almost every job category, but are still limited and tenuous. It is because a large number of managerial and professional women are employed in the public sector, being dependent, therefore on “the size of the government sector in an era of budget austerity and lessening commitment to affirmative action.”⁴³ She continues to point out that one in four Latino families is poor, and the poverty rate

³⁹ Isasi-Díaz, “Economic Violence Against Minority Women in the USA,” 89.

⁴⁰ Ronald L. Taylor, “Minority Families in America: An Introduction,” in *Minority Families in the United States*, ed. Robert L. Taylor (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 1.

⁴¹ Taylor, “Minority Families in America: An Introduction,” 3.

⁴² Isasi-Díaz, “Economic Violence Against Minority Women in the USA,” 92.

⁴³ Teresa L. Amott and Julie Matthaei, *Race, Gender, and Work* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 26, quoted in Isasi-Díaz, “Economic Violence Against Minority Women in the USA,” 94.

of women's heads of households twice as high. Given that Latino women's average weekly income is \$308, while that of European American men is \$565, and European American women are \$416, this can be attributed to the dual suppression of gender and race.⁴⁴ Lastly, Native American women's labor force participation rate increased from 35 % in 1970 to 48 % in 1980, but nearly two-thirds of them only had part-time jobs. It is because of "repressive, inaccessible, and inadequate education ... along with discrimination by employers, and the stagnation of the reservation economy."⁴⁵

d. Emotional and Spiritual Violence

Cultural, economic, and domestic violence against women goes beyond physical oppression and has a fatal effect on women's emotional and spiritual health. Common problems that occur to abused women are negative psychological conditions such as psychological stability, lethargy, anxiety, deterioration of communication skills, and the decline of social ability to control the outside world. The damage that abused women experience is widespread across perceptions, behaviors, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. Emotionally and spiritually abused women have an inferiority complex, low self-esteem, and deny that they are worthy. This phenomenon can be attributed to learned lethargy. Women exposed to repetitive violence are less motivated and passive to react or resist violence. If the emotional state worsens, depression and anxiety intensify, women become lethargic in psychological, cognitive, and interpersonal aspects, which will make them more exposed to violence.⁴⁶ Therefore, women who are exposed

⁴⁴ Isasi-Díaz, "Economic Violence Against Minority Women in the USA," 94.

⁴⁵ US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment and Earnings" (Washington, DC, April 1995), 59, quoted in Isasi-Díaz, "Economic Violence Against Minority Women in the USA," 94.

⁴⁶ Refer to J. C. Campbell, "A Test of Two Explanatory Models of Women's Responses to Battering," *Nursing Research* 38 (Winter 1989): 18-24, and Asmundson Taylor, G. J. G. and R. N.

to repeated violence need help to find their true selves again and being provided with the opportunity to live their lives as self-agency.

4. Small Conclusion of Section A “Women as the Other”

From section A, we have learned how women generally were treated. In the field of general philosophy and education, women were treated thoroughly as the “Other,” and Christianity served as a tool to justify these ideologies were sufficient to subordinate and exclude women. This ideology of domination has gone beyond the epistemological level and has become visible as cultural, domestic, and economic violence against women. Although numerous women have tried continuously to speak up and raise their voices in various contexts and have actively participated in women’s rights and social justice, it seems clear that unless patriarchal and hierarchal structures do not change, women’s resistance will continue.

B. Women as Subject of Religious Education

1. Women’s Movements in Religious Education

Current theological education largely ignores the presence of women and minority women’s experiences.⁴⁷ Women’s religious ideas and life experiences are rarely discussed and only included when men require or allow women’s experiences. According to Rita M. Gross, women were always an object of men’s enjoyment or curiosity rather than being regarded as a complete human being who has their own thought and lives.⁴⁸ Only the adult male was the

Carleton, “Simple Versus Complex PTSD: A Cluster Analytic Investigation,” *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 20 (June 2006): 459-72.

⁴⁷ Rebecca S. Chopp, *Saving Work: Feminist Practices of Theological Education* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 12.

⁴⁸ Rita M. Gross, “Women and Religion: Methods of Study and Reflection,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 3.

human ideal, norm, and standard in areas of academia, and women's lives and their own stories were excluded. When studying the ideas of the concepts of what it means to be human, women usually described as nonhuman objects for men's experience intelligible.⁴⁹ Therefore, theological education for women, the feminist approach to religious education, begins with attention to the subject and questions what is their interest in their context.⁵⁰ In this regard, Chopp claims that we must ask about what women and marginalized women need out of their want and out of their theological education. Because of this, women's movements arose asking these questions: how they can be the subjects in their own worlds, rather objects.

The term *feminism* was first used in the early twentieth century. The first wave of feminism began with the nineteenth-century woman's movement. The first comprehensive argument of women's rights was the interpretation of the Bible, which in the past had interpreted and taught people from a mostly men's perspective and their experiences. Sarah Moore Grimké strongly argues the equal creation of man and women in her book *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes* in 1838. After ten years, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott wrote about "social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women"⁵¹ and continually criticized that women were subordinated in male church, and that men usurped God's right as theirs and claimed as an authentic relationship with God. Furthermore, there was a controversial issue about the ordination of women. Based on Paul's scriptural teachings about prohibitions to women such as wives to be subject to their husbands, to be silent in church, and to refrain from teaching men (1

⁴⁹ Gross, "Women and Religion: Methods of Study and Reflection," 4.

⁵⁰ Chopp, *Saving Work*, 13.

⁵¹ Ann Braude, "Religions and Modern Feminism," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, ed., Skinner Keller and Rosemary Ruether (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 13.

Cor 11:3-12, Col 3:18-19, 1 Tim 2:11-12), women, except radical Quakers, were excluded from ordination and theological education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This issue was a central point for activism among religious feminists.⁵²

The second wave feminism occurred within denominational and ecumenical organizations during the 1950s and 1960s. While the social atmosphere at that time encouraged traditional gender roles, each religion tried to include social justice tradition that motivated by feminism.⁵³ For instance, Theresa Hoover, who was the African American feminist and led the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church from 1968 to 1990, said, "Their [secular feminists] analysis deepened our understanding of the systemic oppression of women. Their determination to revise patriarchal culture and politics energized us."⁵⁴ In 1968 Methodist women successfully accomplished to involve at all structural levels in policy-making and power-sharing roles as maintaining financial autonomy, while other Protestant women's groups struggled with their own funds. Braude also mentions that the United Presbyterian Church in the USA and the American Baptist Convention supported equality for women not only within its own structures but also in every aspect of social and economic life.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the second wave feminists also criticized white women-centered feminist movements that "universalized white, heterosexual, middle-class women's gendered experiences as normative."⁵⁶ Women scholars of color articulate how women and men's experiences are all different based on

⁵² Braude, "Religions and Modern Feminism," 13.

⁵³ Wonhee Anne Joh, "Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality," in *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views*, ed., Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2010), 14.

⁵⁴ Joh, "Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality," 15.

⁵⁵ Joh, "Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality," 15.

⁵⁶ Joh, "Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality," 57.

their ‘race.’ Therefore, Wonhee Anne Joh insists that we should be aware of how white racism misuses race differently against different groups of people.⁵⁷ She also articulates patriarchy and white racism are intimately related to each other. In this regard, Joh argues that all feminists should foster a theological vision that examines how patriarchal ideas sustain itself through the maintenance of racialization and gender construction.⁵⁸

2. Asian and Korean American Protestant Women

As some feminists of color mention, women of color’s experiences and circumstances are different from the experiences of white feminists. As a Korean immigrant, I have been in the United States for ten years. During this time, I have experienced the uniqueness of Asian Americans’ identity struggles and their particular experiences in between different worlds as an immigrant. In this regard, I wondered how the Korean American Christians were able to participate in church, school, and community in foreign lands; thus, I want to take a brief look at its history in this section.

According to Rita Nakashima Brock and Nami Kim, Asian Pacific American women’s history is very complicated with men who started arriving in North America in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ Numerous Asian men arrived in North America to work as laborers, merchants, and gold prospectors in the nineteenth century. At that time, most women were discouraged leaving Asia, with the exception of prostitutes. Around 1860, a few Asian women were transported as prostitutes or wives. The Japanese government and Japanese communities in the United States

⁵⁷ Joh, “Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality,” 58.

⁵⁸ Joh, “Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality,” 58-9.

⁵⁹ Rita Nakashima Brock and Nami Kim, “Asian Pacific American Protestant Women,” in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, ed., Skinner Keller and Rosemary Ruether (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 498.

worked together to reduce prostitution in 1900 through 1920. From 1790 to 1952, congressional law did not allow non-white people to be naturalized citizens of the United States. Therefore, many Asian immigrants had to live on American soil without citizenship. In addition, American conceptualized immigrant, and their cultures as “the matter of something ‘left behind.’”⁶⁰ Three women’s organizations in San Francisco worked remarkably well together during a time of difficult time for Asian immigrants: The Korean Ladies’ Organization, the Chinese Women’s Jeleab (Self-Reliance) Association, and the Chinese Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). These organizations taught the culture of their mother country and took care of second-generation people. They encouraged and supported immigrant women’s struggles to have rights in both countries. The Immigration Act in 1965 allowed Asian Pacific immigrants citizenship equal to that of immigrants from European countries. One-third of legal immigrants is from Asia and is increasing annually.⁶¹

The majority of Asian immigrants were Christian, both Catholic and Protestant. They were influenced by the early Christian missionary activity in Asia that had negative attitudes about Asian religions. They mostly were theologically conservative, aggressively evangelized, and had strong Asian patriarchal traditions. They struggled with male-centered tradition, social attitudes, racism, and sexism in the dominant American society and Christianity.⁶²

On the other hand, Asian immigrants’ history is closely interwoven with Korean American churches’ history in the United States.⁶³ Korean Americans find shelter from racism

⁶⁰ Suyon Pak, Unzu Lee, Jungha Kim, and Myungji Cho, *Singing the Lord’s Song in a New Land: Korean American Practices of Faith* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 9.

⁶¹ Brock and Kim, “Asian Pacific American Protestant Women,” 499-500.

⁶² Brock and Kim, “Asian Pacific American Protestant Women,” 500-501.

⁶³ Christine Hong, *Identity, Youth, and Gender in the Korean American Church* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 6.

and discrimination in American society by building churches. According to Christine Hong, the first wave of Asian American ministers and theologians were committed to promoting anti-racism in their denomination and community, and the second wave of Asian and Korean American theologians focused on “marginality and liminality”⁶⁴ that describes the experience of immigration and immigrants’ feeling of being in-between two different worlds. They also emphasized that the marginality and liminality of immigrants is not only because of their immigrant status but also because of racism, prejudice, and dehumanization.

Finally, the third wave of Korean American theologians uses the theme of marginality and liminality with the lens of “gender, generational status, and multiple marginalities.”⁶⁵ Sharon Kim and Rebecca Y. Kim articulate that Korean American immigrants’ experience of racism and discrimination caused to seek them ethnic specific groups. However, as Jung Ha Kim insists, Korean American immigrant women continue to experience marginality within their congregational life as well.⁶⁶ Christine Hong also argues “in response to this marginalization they seek comfort from their Korean immigrant church contexts only to find they are subjected to additional marginalization through Confucian patriarchy.”⁶⁷ In other words, Korean American women suffer from triple oppression as people of color, immigrants, and women.

Fortunately, Asian American women in the twentieth century are serving as church ministers, campus ministers, scholars, and seminary professors. Their work includes activism inside and outside of the church. Some of them focus on the transformation of the church and social change while others focus on women’s rights and leadership. In the late twentieth century,

⁶⁴ Hong, *Identity, Youth, and Gender in the Korean American Church*, 8.

⁶⁵ Hong, *Identity, Youth, and Gender in the Korean American Church*, 9.

⁶⁶ Hong, *Identity, Youth, and Gender in the Korean American Church*, 9-10.

⁶⁷ Hong, *Identity, Youth, and Gender in the Korean American Church*, 11.

some women had an opportunity to study in higher education and seminaries. As Asian American women continue to participate in church activity and social justice movements with their own unique experiences, they also find “the meaning of marginality and cross-cultural identity, culturally sensitive interpretation, and the interrelationships of individuals with families and communities.”⁶⁸ I believe that their continued participation and leadership in movements will give many women more opportunities for equality and freedom from marginality and patriarchal oppression.

Throughout this section, I explored the particular experience of marginalized women; women’s participation in the church, community, denomination, and seminaries; resistance to racial and gender discrimination; and a brief history of Asian and Korean American immigrants, in particular, women’s lives. Historically, male-dominated society oppressed women as objects, and even “women become viewed as an extension of the male slaves.”⁶⁹ From this point of view, Christianity is no exception. Christianity is a predominately patriarchal religion where even God is male. As Grace Ji-Sun Kim argues, patriarchal Christianity must be challenged and Westernized Christianity must also overcome racism, prejudice, and the subordination of women. Numerous women have tried continuously to speak up and raise their voices in various contexts and have actively participated in women’s rights and social justice.⁷⁰ I believe that exploring and learning about women’s movements would open new possibilities for other marginalized people. Also, we should think critically about things that we often take for granted

⁶⁸ Brock and Kim, “Asian Pacific American Protestant Women,” 505.

⁶⁹ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 84.

⁷⁰ Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 85.

by asking questions such as: who defines this matter? I believe that these questions will give us the opportunity to live our own lives and help us not to become subordinate.

3. Decolonization of Knowledge

Since the study of theological education also has been male-dominated, women must create a new notion of equality from their own perspective and experience. Therefore, I will study how we should approach and teach religious education to marginalized and oppressed people from the postcolonial feminist perspective in this section.

According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, traditional education is hostile to other belief systems or has no methodology to address and understand the other knowledge systems. Disciplines at universities offer various methods of understanding for the world. However, some of them include more deeply a colonial perspective because they gained knowledge from the colonized world or they tested their thoughts in the colonies.⁷¹ For example, when the Japanese colonized Korea, they first occupied schools. They banned the use of Korean and forced people to rename themselves in Japanese. In other words, the Japanese held a superior position over Korea and ruled over Korean knowledge, language, and culture. Likewise, colonialism in the nineteenth century was “the imposition of Western authority over all aspects of indigenous knowledge, language, and culture.”⁷² Western authority strongly occupied ideologies, norms, and general belief and philosophical theories, and became the basis for everything. David Goldberg argues that the concept of the Other, which is a strategy of imperialism in the nineteenth century, was racially divided within the framework of liberalism and within the ideas of people and societies

⁷¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London and NY: Zed Books Ltd, 1999), 65.

⁷² Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 64.

that developed as academics through liberalism. This way of thinking has been further embodied by the psychological justification for the distinctions between civilized and uncivilized.⁷³

Furthermore, Michel Foucault articulates that disciplines and education functioned as “formulas of domination” in the eighteenth century within schools, military organizations, and hospitals.⁷⁴ The way of living or thinking of indigenous people was ruled out and left out. However, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak points out, the most problematic thing is that the changing of academic systems and knowledge is very difficult, and even colonized knowledge has been deeply internalized by marginalized people.⁷⁵ In this regard, liberating the ways of thinking of marginalized people from the colonized knowledge should be the first step for the decolonizing of religious education, which is deeply grounded in Western belief, and for creating a new pedagogy from the postcolonial perspective.

However, Paulo Freire articulates that colonized people are afraid of freedom because they have internalized the colonizer’s imaginations and guidelines. Therefore, he argues that oppressed people are caught in between the desire for freedom and the fear of freedom. Freire mentions:

The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting them; between human solidarity or alienation; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world. This is the tragic dilemma of the oppressed which their education must take into account.⁷⁶

⁷³ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 65-66.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 68.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 71.

⁷⁶ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, London: Continuum, 2000), 48.

In a similar way, Freire insists that there is never such a ‘neutral’ education. Education is also a matter where we have to choose between the two: education can serve as a tool to absorb new generations into the logic of the current system and adapt them to it; or people can choose the practice of freedom, which means that men and women respond critically and creatively to reality and find ways to transform their world. It is one of these two. Freire argues that humanization and dehumanization are actually two things to choose from, but humanization is a human mission because the situation of oppression is the sum of ‘dehumanization’ that affects both oppressors and oppressed alike.⁷⁷ Therefore, Freire recommends a pedagogy of the oppressed that must be made with oppressed people who constantly struggle to regain their humanity. For liberation, the oppressed must fight to solve the contradictions that inevitably bind them. This does not mean the replacement of the seats of the oppressed and the oppressors. Rather, as Hegel articulates, “true solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these beings for another.”⁷⁸ This means that the oppressed and oppressors must have a respectful dialogue with one another.

Freire also insists that oppressors are not interested in the oppressed situation but rule over the consciousness of the oppressed.⁷⁹ The oppressed people’s struggle begins from the moment they realize that they were destroyed, which means they cannot be subjects, but rather they live as subordinates of their oppressors. The only tool used at this time is education for humanization, which comes as revolutionary leaders are creating an interrelation of dialogue with oppressed people. Therefore, Freire articulates that the dialogue cannot be possible without

⁷⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 43-46.

⁷⁸ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 49.

⁷⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 74.

a respectful mind to the other, and the dialogue must be built on the foundation of love because it is love itself.⁸⁰ At this point, we learn that anyone cannot bring about change to their lives unless they become the subjects of their lives. Only the subject can liberate himself or herself from oppression, changing their lives and the society in which they belong. In this regard, I would like to explore some examples of how the oppressed, especially women, can self-liberate themselves as subjects, change their perception of God, and practice their faith.

4. How to Decolonize Women and Deconstruct their Understanding of God?

Firstly, Boyong Lee introduces Asian American Women's pedagogy by using a unique Korean term, *sonmat*, which literally means the taste of one's hands that decide the flavor of food.⁸¹ Lee articulates that the written texts and formal education have historically been male-dominated. There is no exception to Asian culture and education. As Lee described it in comparison to *sonmat*, women wisely used the patriarchal norm of formal education in a holistic way. Women did not focus on its texts, but they also paid attention to the context of the text. For example, when Lee tasted a particular dish, she remembered not only the food itself but also was reminded of the occasion of eating itself, such as the people around the table, the atmosphere of the room, shared stories, and some emotions at that moment. Lee argues that engaging the stories and experiences of the past, present, and future are the holistic way. She says, "This holistic way of teaching and learning as Asian and Asian North American women practice it is faithful to the true meaning of education."⁸² In addition, Maria Harris also insists: "[Thus] ventures that

⁸⁰ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 87-90.

⁸¹ Boyong Lee, "Re-Creating Our Mother's Dishes: Asian and Asian North American Women's Pedagogy," in *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women's Religion and Theology*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock et al. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 293-94.

⁸² Lee, "Re-Creating Our Mother's Dishes," 295.

everything that a church does – fellowship meetings, informal gatherings, small group meetings, and so on – should be understood as curricula.”⁸³ Even though Asian women cannot be fully members of the communal cultural context, which is hierarchical and patriarchal, they embrace those cultural contexts and take communal personhood that respects others and women themselves. As women use various methods such as storytelling, drama, dialogue, dance, rituals, or action plans as the community, they remember and recreate the flavor of food and develop their own pedagogy which is *sonmat* pedagogy.⁸⁴ In sum, despite the imbalance of educational opportunities between women and men within the patriarchal and hierarchical cultural context, Asian American women do not avoid the obstacles that oppress them but have applied them wisely and used them to practice their own living pedagogy. These attempts are important practices that make them stand upright as subjects and restore their rights to themselves.

Secondly, Hee An Choi argues the image of God that is Westernized with a different perspective from a patriarchal view. Patriarchal Christianity has emphasized the Father God, which is male-centered. It seemed almost impossible for Korean Christianity to think of God in other metaphors except for “Father.” The term Father gives the image of an omnipotent and strong warrior who is bold and a higher Holy being. Therefore, women were often afraid of God who did not listen to their voices. Christie Cozad Neuger points out that “Images of God that combine authority, power, rationality, protectiveness of others, kingship, dependability, righteous anger, maleness and fatherhood have a formative and normative effect on dominant definitions of manhood and masculinity.”⁸⁵ In this regard, Choi suggests re-constructing the

⁸³ Lee, “Re-Creating Our Mother’s Dishes,” 297.

⁸⁴ Lee, “Re-Creating Our Mother’s Dishes,” 300.

⁸⁵ Hee An Choi, *Korean Women and God: Experiencing God in Multi-Religious Colonial Context* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 155.

attributes of God for women's understanding of themselves and their lives. Nemesis, an eschatological savior, and mystery are traditional patriarchal Christian terms used to describe the image of God. These images of God can influence women in negative ways, such as making them be passive in changing their lives against suffering and by not allowing them to objectify the reality of life; rather it is considered as mystery and is used as a tool to justify the suffering and pain of women.⁸⁶ In this manner, Choi suggests that women should use different religious language, which gives women a direction in a conflict between their inner and outer voices. First, she describes God as a family in that women only trust their own family instead of trusting nations or anyone else in the period of colonialism. According to Choi:

Living together with God as family, women have healed their brokenness and redeemed their wounded hearts. God as family can sustain women's lives without terror or fear about intimate violence. God as family can also empower women to overcome the patriarchal world, bringing peace to their lives and hope for abundant life.⁸⁷

Second, Choi suggests God as a liberator. Within the patriarchal culture, many Korean Christian women were ignored and were forced to conform to traditional roles. Women's leadership was limited and male ministers took over all authority. God was often replaced by men, and women became unable to dream of being a better person or a better church. Nevertheless, women did not forget their liberator God. They even saw and experienced God as Liberator. The Liberator God is not only for Christians but also for all human beings beyond the church. The Liberator God is not limited by patriarchal Christianity. The Liberator God works for justice and love, wants to change society, and invites people—in particular women and

⁸⁶ Choi, *Korean Women and God*, 155-57.

⁸⁷ Choi, *Korean Women and God*, 113.

marginalized persons—to create equality, solidarity, and interconnections between all human beings regardless of religion.⁸⁸

Finally, Choi argues for God as a Friend. God as a Friend is not a ruler but one who wants to communicate with human beings by listening to their feelings, concerns, pains, and even wishes. Through this understanding of God, God and women can have an equal, mutual, and interdependent relationship. Choi articulates, “God as Friend shares the burden of the patriarchal and hierarchal discrimination of an unjust world, yearns for justice, and offers hope and endless strength.”⁸⁹

In sum, God as Family, Liberator, and Friend moves beyond patriarchal and hierarchal tradition and structure. God as Family, Liberator, and Friend wants women and oppressed people to participate in changing our unjust world together and in the transformation of themselves and their contexts. As Choi recognizes because of patriarchal and hierarchal imbalances and inequalities against women, a new perception of God is necessary. Choi helped women express in their own language the God they felt and experienced. Most of all, when women recognize God as the God of communication, they create an equal and interconnected relationship with God. This effort is a way to decolonize patriarchal religious elements to liberate women and oppressed people as well as the image of God.

Third, several scholars point out colonized institutional systems. Willie James Jennings argues that religious education is male-centered, specifically Euro-male centric. He argues that women and people of color have faced at least two contradictions: 1) although women and people of color have opportunities to be part of disciplines, the majority of disciplines disregards

⁸⁸ Choi, *Korean Women and God*, 119-23.

⁸⁹ Choi, *Korean Women and God*, 130.

them as conversation partners; and 2) even though women and people of color hope for their future in higher institutions, they are under the shadows of a giant hegemony that forces them to adapt to social organizations according to their oppressor's desire.⁹⁰ In other words, women and people of color are systemically marginalized and excluded from disciplines. Peter T. Cha also insists that the world and society both in the ancient and modern are Euro-centric. For this reason, European descendants regard their identity as highly symbolic in nature because their identities are neither competitive nor resisted by others.

However, the identities of people of color are different. Their identities are often contested and resisted by the white people.⁹¹ Although society and the world become more ethnically and culturally diverse and women and people of color have increased in seminaries, there is still a lack of institutional systems to respect and understand the oppressed. Thus, we should prepare a concrete educational system to embrace women and people of color and understand their experiences and perspectives. For this work, we should be critical about "how the dominant educational structures use power and control knowledge to restrict and silence difference."⁹²

On the one hand, Mary John Mananzan points out traditional religious education taught women to be "submissive, docile, patient, long-suffering, self-sacrificing. These are all

⁹⁰ Willie James Jennings, "What Shall We Teach? The Content of Theological Education," in *Teaching for a Culturally Diverse and Racially Just World*, ed. Eleazar S. Fernandez (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2014), 109-11.

⁹¹ Peter T. Cha, "Racial/Ethnic Diversity and Student Formation," in *Teaching for a Culturally Diverse and Racially Just World*, 71.

⁹² Julia M. Speller, "A Pedagogy of the Unmasked: Unheard but Not Unvoiced, Unseen but Not Invisible," in Fernandez, *Teaching for a Culturally Diverse and Racially Just World*, 171.

characteristics of victim consciousness.”⁹³ In this regard, Mananzan strongly criticizes the church for not properly and correctly dealing with violence against women; for example, by the lack of awareness of violence against women; pushing premature reconciliation before the fundamental solution of the violence has been found; silence; and the misuse of the Bible.⁹⁴ Therefore, Mananzan suggests the church adapt and promote ‘a spirituality of self-affirmation,’ ‘a spirituality of empowerment,’ and ‘a spirituality of inner freedom: self-knowledge and self-acceptance’ for women.⁹⁵ These spiritual practices enable women to recognize their worth and dignity and heal women’s inner being and wounds.

In sum, several scholars identify the absence of a practical education system for women and people of color’s equality and humanization. They claim we need to overcome from European male-dominated education and create an environment in which all humans, especially oppressed women and people of color, are equally educated and can speak out. This will allow women and people of color to lead their own lives as sincere human beings, away from systemically colonized education.

5. Small Conclusion of Section B “Women as Subject of Religious Education”

I explored the role of women in religious education from a postcolonial feminist perspective and how higher education, social systems, and traditional Christianity are all male-centered, white-centered, and hierarchal in form. Within this socially, culturally, and traditionally organized systems and structures, women, people of color, and marginalized people have been

⁹³ Mary John Mananzan, “Theological Reflections on Violence against Women (A Catholic Perspective),” in *Gendering the Spirit: Women, Religion and the Post-Colonial Response*, ed. Durre S. Ahmed (London: Zed Books, 2002), 208.

⁹⁴ Mananzan, “Theological Reflections on Violence,” 209-10.

⁹⁵ Mananzan, “Theological Reflections on Violence,” 211.

oppressed. They have been and continue to be dehumanized and their experiences and lives are ignored and excluded. Therefore, critical thinking is needed to see this reality rightly, and deconstruct male-dominated knowledge. The deconstruction of male-dominated knowledge also allows women and people of color to overcome dichotomous thinking that men are superior, and women are inferior. Wonhee Anne Joh explains about marginalized space as follows:

... such marginalized space can be turned into ‘interstitial third space,’ when one recognizes that identity is not fixed and the boundaries are permeable. ... ‘We are permeable selves, and this boundary of the permeable self breaches the impossible possible’. A key concept in postcolonial theory that addresses the convergence of multiple identities and positionalities is hybridity. ... Hybridity can be imposed such that it is a product of oppression.⁹⁶

In other words, one can be an oppressor and also oppressed because our identity and position are not fixed, but flexible. In some people’s eyes, hybridity may be considered inferior, but the understanding of hybridity helps to develop “hybrid identities of immigrant and diasporic communities and their Christian formation and social practice.”⁹⁷ Through decolonizing and deconstructing traditional religious education, perceptions of God, and patriarchal and hierarchical structures, oppressed people can enrich their own theology, create their own pedagogy, and are able to liberate themselves. It is important to remember that this decolonizing and deconstructing process is not only for women, people of color, and oppressed people but also for all human beings including men; through this work, all people are able to become more fully human.

⁹⁶ Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 64.

⁹⁷ Kwok Pui-lan, “Changing Identities and Narrativities: Postcolonial Theologies,” in *Complex Identities in a Shifting World*, ed. Pamela Couture et al. (Zürich: LIT, 2015), 124.

C. Women in Korean Confucian Culture and Christianity

1. Confucianism and Women in Korea

Generally, Confucian ideology is about the rule for women, especially for married women, its rule becomes harsher such as ‘Wife must be respectful; wife must be prudent; wife must obey her husband and serve the parent-in-law.’ In other words, obedience and subordination to men in Confucian culture is the women’s best virtue and the proper way to keep the family and society stable.⁹⁸ Obedience within Confucian culture means hierarchical order, reminding us of the relationship between dominator and subordinate. If children are involved, the role of a mother becomes more important than a wife. Because the child-raising is a more important function than the femininity of the wife in terms of succession and establishment of the family. Within the Confucian tradition, women never are able to share an equal position with their husbands because it might threaten family order. Consequently, the fate of women is to practice obedience to her father as a daughter, her husband as a wife, and her son as a mother.

Although it is not known exactly when Confucian thoughts came to Korea, some scholars presume that Confucianism was introduced to Korea around 100 B.C.E., especially there were some Korean Confucian scholars during the United Silla period. For the unified kingdom, Silla needed strong ideologies such as Confucian political ideas, King Mun-mu of Silla, who achieved Korean unification, emphasized Confucian humanism for the unification and rule of the country, while Kim Sin-moon founded the Royal Confucian Academy to teach Confucianism and

⁹⁸ Chu Chai and Windberg Chai, ed., *The Sacred Books of Confucius and Other Confucian Classics* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1965), 1.

classics. Some scholars such as Kangsu, Sulchong, and Choe Chi-won supported and strengthened Confucian knowledge and the politics of the king.⁹⁹

During the Koryo Dynasty, there were many other beliefs, but Neo-Confucianism was more widespread and studied as spiritual and intellectual purposes.¹⁰⁰ The Neo-Confucianism of humanism was applied to social reform, which became the philosophical foundation of the newly emerging Cho-sun kingdom.¹⁰¹ Neo-Confucianism, as the study of self-discipline, quickly spread among the elites in Korea, and as a result it has become a major curriculum in the highest academic institutions.¹⁰² Particularly, the Cho-sun dynasty tried to transform Korean society into Confucianism as they emphasized four important rites such as capping, wedding, funeral, and ancestor worship. It was because the Cho-sun dynasty believed that Confucianism could activate a good mind in people, which could create the human mind by practicing rituals. Confucian thoughts led to the construction of domestic shrines such as *Saddang* to honor the ancestors, and only the elderly man in the family could hold ancestor worship. This was an extraordinary change in Korean society because women were ritual practitioners in other religious traditions.¹⁰³ In other words, the institutionalization of Confucian-style ancestor worship has opened the door to a patriarchal concept in Korean society.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Eui Dong Hwang, *한국의 유학사상* [Korean Confucianism] (Seoul: Seo Kang Sa, 1995), 14-31.

¹⁰⁰ Hwang, *Korean Confucianism*, 33.

¹⁰¹ Chibaek Yi, "Native Beliefs," in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 1, *From Early Times through the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Peter H. Lee and William Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 240-41.

¹⁰² Hyang An, "Neo-Confucianism," in Lee and Bary, *Sources of Korean Tradition*, 251-54.

¹⁰³ Kilsong Ch'es, "Male and Female in Korean Folk Belief," *Asian Folklore Studies* 43, no. 2 (1984): 229.

¹⁰⁴ Chi Yi, "Funerary and Ancestral Rites," in Lee and Bary, *Sources of Korean Tradition*, 315.

The Confucian rituals emphasized women's lower position within the family and society.

Sin Sukchu, who is one of the scholars in Cho-sun dynasty, articulates women's role as follow:

A wife is royal and pure, self-controlled, flexible and obedient, and serving others. She minds the domestic realm exclusively and does not concern herself with public affairs. ... Above, she serves her parents-in-law; if she is not sincere and respectful, she cannot fulfill her filial loyalty. ... Below, she treats the slave servants well. ... Only if she is sincere and respectful in serving her superiors and kind and benevolent in treating her subordinates is there complete affection between husband and wife.¹⁰⁵

Within the Confucian tradition, women have often been placed in the inferior and subordinate position. The essence of women in a family was defined only by her behavior as a daughter-in-law or as a wife, including the ability to give birth to a son. While the husband dominated the public domain, the role of the wife was limited by charging in the domestic realm. Women were only given a role to assist and follow men in the house. Women were excluded from the inheritance distribution because they could not be the head of the family. The patrilineal society kept women's status low and limited in both economic and social aspects.

Confucian thoughts required women's obedience to her father, husband, and son that represents the unequal relationship between women and men. Traditionally, if the wife could not bear a son or a child, they adopted a son or the husband could have a concubine. In this case, the woman was generally discriminated against by the entire family and could be the object of blame but not the husband.¹⁰⁶

In fact, the original meaning of Confucianism was based on the values of order and harmony and emphasized that the most precious gift is life. Confucian thinkers practiced ancestor worship in order to respect and appreciate life. However, it has turned into an ideology

¹⁰⁵ Sukchu Sin, "House Rules," in Lee and Bary, *Sources of Korean Tradition*, 326.

¹⁰⁶ Ch'oe, "Male and Female in Korean Folk Belief," 228-29.

that supports the establishment and men. Besides, “Confucianism has been more strongly exercised than any other religion or political structure [in Cho-sun dynasty.] ... It becomes a hierarchal social organization that maintained social, institutional, and political order and that functioned as the primary system of classification in Korean society.”¹⁰⁷

Even though industrialization and westernization offered women to be educated, to have jobs and positions in the family and society, the perception of women’s inferiority and misogyny still exists in Korean society. Although women have been educated as same as men, their opportunity for labor and its value is unequal, unlike men. It is because Confucian and male-centered society has not provided a fundamental change in women’s economic status and their role in the family.

2. Adapting Christianity in Confucian Korean Culture

Within the Confucian tradition, Korean women have never been treated equally with men. However, as Catholicism which was the first form of Christianity, was spread throughout Korean society, women tried to overcome the structure of Confucian oppression by rejecting the strong patriarchal marriage system. Women were usually called ‘who’s wife’ or ‘who’s mother,’ but they came across a shocking gospel in terms of equality that anyone who believes in Jesus can be saved and that everyone is God’s child.

Moreover, Western-style educational institutions that entered with Christianity provided women with opportunities to be educated through church education and public educational institutions. Also, many women were able to have new names or have their own unique names as they register for the church. Not only this was indeed an experience of liberation towards

¹⁰⁷ Choi, *Korean Women and God*, 36.

women, but also became a revolutionary meaning that salvation was equally given to the underprivileged, who had been suppressed in Confucian discriminatory structures such as royalty and slave.¹⁰⁸

Today, 27.6 percent of the total population of Korea is Christian,¹⁰⁹ and 70 percent of them are women. It was because Christianity encouraged women to liberate themselves from the effects of the repressive patriarchal system throughout Korean history; so that women worked as the main supporters and propagators of Christianity. Furthermore, Christianity provided women with opportunities to work outside the home by offering them specific roles in the church, and gave them educational opportunities as well. This was a major revolution for women and patriarchal structure in Korean society.¹¹⁰

However, Christianity, which offered great changes to women and traditional Confucian ideas, also had its limitations. That is, Christianity itself had Western colonial patriarchal ideas and structures. Particularly, missionaries who propagated Christianity to Korea were mainly people with conservative theological thoughts in the United States. Although they gave Korean women opportunities for public education, their ultimate goal of that education was to produce a husband's companion and wise mother of children with a reasonable living attitude within the home.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Kang, *Feminist Theology*, 284-85.

¹⁰⁹ Daejin Kim, "Religious Population Ranking 1 Christianity (45%), Ranking 2 Buddhism (35%), Ranking 3 Catholicism (18%)," *Coramdeo.com*, January 15, 2019, <http://www.kscoramdeo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=14336>.

¹¹⁰ Choi, *Korean Women and God*, 44.

¹¹¹ Woojeong Lee, *한국 기독교 여성 백년의 발자취* [Korean Christian Women's Footprint of the Hundred Years] (Seoul: Minjoongsa, 1985), 36.

As Christianity began to take root deeply in Korean society, the church began to further strengthen its male-centered and patriarchal structure and system. Although most Christians are women, they mainly serve to assist men. In other words, the reality is that women are excluded from the leadership roles, forcing them to serve and sacrifice which are similar to their roles in the home.

When a religion tried to take root in a society, it is impossible to exist without the cultural or religious implications of that society. In this respect, the relationship between Confucianism and Korean Christianity deeply influenced by the educational ideology of the Korean people and the national system has an indistinguishable link. There are attempts to positively evaluate the encounter between Confucianism and Christianity, but Namsoon Kang sees that being the biggest obstacle to the life of a mature Christian is the influence of Confucianism. She articulates the influences of Korean Confucianism and Christianity into three points.

The first point is about the understanding of familism and denominationalism. The most important thing in Confucianism is family. Being a family is a sacred community beyond a personal dimension, a natural basis for all moral and political acts, and a biological source of all systems. The family system is the basis of all social organizations, including the government. It is the most important task to regard a family as the source of everything and to connect the family's pulse, and the blood relation, the center of this, is the most important key element in Confucianism.¹¹²

Kang argues that it is Korean denominationalism that has been influenced by this kind of familism. Korea's unique blood, region, and personal relationships are largely influenced by

¹¹² Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 103-04.

Confucianism, which sets family-blood ties as the best of society. When these blood and personal relationships become dominant tendencies, the biggest problem is that they may lack universal values or norms. The lack of universal values or norms leads to a lack of ‘justice’ concepts and a lack of democratic consciousness. Moreover, since Confucian familism is based on the establishment of male-centered and hierarchical relationships, a horizontal equality relationship that begins with the recognition of human dignity cannot be achieved. This Confucian familism has been reinforced with denominationalism, individual church-centered, and personal relationship-centered in Korean Christianity, and further rationalized sexism.¹¹³

The second point is about male supremacy and sexism. One of the most important things in Confucianism is to carry on a family line. Thus, the worst filial piety is not to give birth to a descendant from generation to generation; in here, the descendant means a boy, not a girl.¹¹⁴ The male preference and male supremacy emphasized in Confucianism reflect that only men become the center of the family and can succeed in the family.

In this understanding, women are only required to be filial to their husband’s parents, and given that ancestors are essentially ‘male ancestor’ in ancestor worship,¹¹⁵ it is an inevitable request to have sons at various levels of life. That’s why there were women who were kicked out for failing to give birth to sons, and many Korean women made desperate efforts to have sons.

¹¹³ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 105-06.

¹¹⁴ James Legge, trans., *The Four Books: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Works of Mencius* (NY: Paragon, 1966), 725, quoted in Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 106.

¹¹⁵ Winston L. King, *Introduction to Religion* (NY: Harper & Row, 1954), 168, quoted in Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 107.

Women are not free from Confucian ideology, which believes that the birth of a boy is directly linked to their survival and achievement.¹¹⁶

The problem with Confucianism defining family as a sacred community is that it sets only ‘man’ as normative human beings, not the regulation itself. Seeing that women are excluded from the rituals for the most important ancestors in Confucianism, it is in fact clear that Confucianism is a male religion. Besides, Confucian male supremacy combined in conjunction with Christianity has resulted in stronger sexism. Just as the leadership of Confucianism has been entirely monopolized by men, men largely monopolize the leadership of church, denomination, and seminary. In other words, in the practical spaces, gender discrimination still serves as a powerful mechanism, and what most women do in the church is kitchen work, which is an extension of what they do at home. According to Donald N. Clark, “In the church hierarchy, women were welcome as Sunday school teachers and lay workers ‘Bible-women,’ and were often elected to middle-level governing bodies such as boards of deacons.”¹¹⁷ Women were supposed to assist the pastors, take care of newcomers as finding the Bibles and hymnbooks, and teaching little children. Even today, women’s role in the church is no different from the past. That is, the patriarchal spirit of Confucianism and the patriarchal structure of Christianity have met, and Korean Christianity has become stronger sexism.¹¹⁸

Finally, the third point is about conservative inclination. Just as Karl Mannheim said religion has become an ideology, religion has a strong tendency to maintain the status quo as it takes a stable position in society. That is, religion as an ideology fundamentally blocks any

¹¹⁶ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 107.

¹¹⁷ Donald N. Clark, *Christianity in Modern Korea* (Lanham, London: University Press of America, 1986), 28.

¹¹⁸ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 110.

attempts to change the unjust structure of society. Likewise, the practice of filial piety and loyalty emphasized in Confucianism requires full devotion before the judgment of right and wrong, so it is difficult to practice the reformatory spirit under Confucian thoughts.¹¹⁹ Also, Confucianism's perspective on history is negative about the transformation attempted by human will because it sees human history as regression and repetition.

Furthermore, the conservative tendency of Confucianism emerged in oppressive and discriminatory forms in real life. Confucianism strengthened the culture of discrimination and obedience between legitimate son and a child of a concubine; men and women; nobleman and the lower classes; and elder and younger, and blocked the culture of equality and dialogue.¹²⁰

When Christianity first came into Korea, Christianity was a religion of resistance and transformation, resisting the oppression and discriminatory structures of Confucian culture at that time. However, as Christianity became a stable religion in Korean society, it began to lose its transformative characteristics. In other words, combined with the conservative tendency of Christianity and Confucianism, Koreanized Christianity has turned into a strong conservative Christianity, which is not listening to the call for the new change.¹²¹

3. Small Conclusion of Section C “Women in Korean Confucian Culture and Christianity”

Early Christian women in Korea had a chance to gain a new social position through educational opportunities and activities within the church while being under the leadership of their husbands at home. In a way, women who had been suppressed in patriarchal Confucian thoughts had no choice but to choose Christianity to gain their freedom and opportunity outside

¹¹⁹ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 111.

¹²⁰ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 113.

¹²¹ Kang, *Feminism and Christianity*, 111-12.

of the home. Thus, patriarchal Confucianism combined with male-centered Western Christianity, and gradually, to become a good wife and a good daughter-in-law in the Confucian patriarchal family meant to become a good Christian woman.¹²² In other words, Korean Confucianism has provided the strongest ideology in rationalizing and strengthening classism and sexism both logically and institutionally. Therefore, Korean women are forced to experience cultural and religious double and triple discrimination, exclusion, and subordination.

D. Conclusion

We have learned that women were treated as the “other” and are alienated in religious education, and subordinated in traditional Christianity which is rooted in imperialism and patriarchy. This awakes us that we should break away from the Christian tradition of imperialism and patriarchal ideology, and further, should remember that Christianity has not only patriarchal traditions but also egalitarian traditions. Before Christianity became the official religion, it was the ‘equal community’ of those who wanted to live by practicing the spirit of Jesus. It was also the ‘liberation community’ of those who were marginalized and oppressed by society. Above all, Jesus’ life that breaks down traditions and customs, which dehumanizes people, shows us how to live against any kind of discrimination and exclusion based on gender, race, and class. This life of Jesus will be reinterpreted in the next chapter 3 as a postcolonial feminist theological approach and treated in a little more detail.

¹²² Sook Jin Lee, *한국 기독교와 여성 정체성* [Korean Christianity and Women’s Identity] (Seoul: Han Deul Publisher, 2006), 94-95.

CHAPTER III

POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUE

In chapter II, we learned that after Christianity became the official religion, they lost the early Christ people's first values, which respect one another beyond their status and gender as a subversive community against the Roman Empire. Instead, Christianity dishonorably became a symbol of men/white-centered and imperial ideological religion. Before developing religious education for transforming these corrupted Christian values, I will explore postcolonial feminist theology that will be a tool and a fundamental theory for analyzing patriarchal and hierarchical society and Christian theology in this chapter.

First of all, I understand colonialism as still being practiced in the present moment through cultural, religious, economic, and political domination in the current social structures and systems. In other words, colonialism is not a matter of the past but is our reality that continues cognitively and structurally throughout the world today, which is evident in the present life of globalization and neo-colonialism.¹ Furthermore, modern colonialism can be seen as colonialism that has spread more broadly and systematically through a knowledge system, not through visible forces such as territorial domination. In this regard, postcolonial discourse is based on the perception that we should discover and confront the remnants of colonies that remain and exert destructive influence not only during the colonial period but also after independence. And even more important in the postcolonial discourse is the fact that the target of

¹ Kim-Cragg, *Story and Song*, 7. HyeRan Kim-Cragg articulates that institutions of globalization and neo-colonialism include financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Western media such as CNN, and multinational organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and North American Trade Organization (NATO).

criticism is not only the dominators but also the oppressed people who internalized colonial ideology into themselves. If the tasks of the Postcolonialism are to threaten “the practice of exclusion and subordination that are based on those distinctions,”² which are not only practices of the dominant but also of the subordinated, whether they are practicing by imitation, tradition, or defensive reaction of the dominant, the postcolonial theory will help people to recognize ideologies of exclusion and subordination that internalized into the social and cultural structures and religious practices.

Based on this pre-understanding of postcolonialism, I will address the important concepts and postcolonial feminist theological significance. I believe that through the postcolonial feminist theology, people will be aware of what kind of ideologies affect themselves and will promote life-giving experience in their everyday lives that bring about a transformation of self, community, and governance structures. Furthermore, as revisiting Jesus’ stories that are described in the Gospel from a postcolonial feminist perspective, we will have opportunities to have a new vision toward life to love our neighbor, which Jesus practiced and realized it in his entire life. This process will be an important foundation for realizing identity as God’s children.

A. What is Postcolonial Feminist Theology?

In general, postcolonialism is a theory and movement that deals with the effects of colonialism in cultural and social domains. Postcolonialism can be seen as a study dealing with ideologies that have influenced the grand discourses of imperialism such as migration, slavery, oppression, resistance, race, gender, space, history, philosophy, linguistics, etc. Postcolonialism

² Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera, “Introduction,” in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 13.

is also the ongoing process of resistance and reconstruction to epistemological, cultural, and intellectual colonization by the West. In addition, it is very useful discourse resistance and has significance as a critical discourse in that it serves to dig into the various power structures and associations between the dominator/subordinated and to shed critical light on their relationships.³ This is where the postcolonial discourse and feminism discourse meet. In particular, if the political purpose of feminism is to find out how to resist women's lives, which women experience double or triple colonialism of patriarchy and neo-colonialism, and further expand the horizon of liberation, feminism discourse has a joint task with postcolonial discourse.⁴ In the binary way of thinking that the postcolonial discourse is in terms of East/West, and the feminism discourse is in terms of women/men, postcolonial feminist discourse criticizes the problem of the "Othering" that the East is marginalized by the West and women are subordinated by men.⁵ Therefore, it is possible that postcolonial and feminist discourse can have a good partnership and solidarity in terms of feminist discourse pursues resistance and liberation against patriarchy, and postcolonial discourse pursues resistance and liberation against neo-colonialism.⁶ In this regard, we will explore a few key concepts in postcolonial discourse.

1. Key Concepts

a. Orientalism

First of all, we need to look at Edward Said's discourse of "Orientalism," since he is the cornerstone of postcolonial theory.⁷ He critically points out how the structure of Western

³ Namsoon Kang, "Postcolonial Feminist Theology in Korea: Its Discursive Implications and Tasks," *Korean Theological Study Institution* no. 132 (Spring 2006): 197.

⁴ Kang, "Postcolonial Feminist Theology in Korea," 198.

⁵ Kang, "Postcolonial Feminist Theology in Korea," 199.

⁶ Kang, "Postcolonial Feminist Theology in Korea," 199.

⁷ Refer to Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

colonial rule over the East was created through the term “Orient,” which refers to “the Other.” According to Said, the term *Orient* “is not merely a mental exercise but involves eminent historical, social, intellectual, and political agendas, taking place within individuals and institutions in all societies.”⁸ In other words, the ideology of the term *Orient* deeply influences and internalizes in both consciousness and unconsciousness of people, as it becomes a fundamental root throughout the culture, religion, social structure, and system. For this reason, recognizing what imperial ideology has been embedded is a very important basis for establishing the identity as a “christ.” It is because the secretly latent ideology of “Othering” has a deep influence on people’s values and behaviors and further affects people to internalize strong binary concepts such as good/bad, men/women, dominator/subordinated, and so on. In this manner, the term ‘Orient’ became a tool to indicate Eastern as an object “which could be known by a European subject as it could not know itself. This line of argument effectively founded a new area in textual and cultural studies, that of post-colonial theory.”⁹

According to Namsoon Kang, postcolonialism “involves not only a socio- or geopolitical realm, but also interpersonal, institutional, [and] or theological realm[s] of discourse and practice.”¹⁰ This reminds us of the fact that Western European white supremacy and imperial ideology work structurally and cognitively and further deeply affect not only people’s perceptions but also the structure and institutions of society. In other words, imperial and westernized ideologies became normative across all kinds of knowledge, culture, and religion, and thus Western religion and its study are perceived as superior, academic, and intellectual.

⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 331-32, quoted in Kim-Cragg, *Story and Song*, 27.

⁹ Antony Easthope, “Homi Bhabha, Hybridity and Identity, Or Derrida vs. Lacan,” *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 4, no. 1/2 (1998): 145.

¹⁰ Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 111.

The most serious problem is that these Western-centered ideologies do not simply end up as their one-sided discourse. These ideologies in the West are reproduced in the consciousness of the subordinated. Orientalism, which is based on dichotomy, black-and-white logic, and hierarchical system, excludes, alienates, and distorts diversity by typifying certain objects such as men, whites, and Christianity. That is, Oriental ideology, which is the fundamental idea of postcolonialism, colonizes the “other,” distorts them as an object which should be educated, and treats them as weak and inferior. Therefore, the ideology of the “Others” that is specifying and standardizing the existence of the true self as an inferior must be reinterpreted and reconsidered. Furthermore, there is a significance of postcolonial theology to find, criticize, and subvert the discourse of imperialist oppressive culture and ruling ideology inherent in all modern social structures.

b. Othering

As we have seen above, Orientalism is a typical portrayal of the “Othering.” The “Othering,” which is the basis of the dichotomous ideology of subject and object, implies the relationship between superiority and inferiority that in turn leads to the “logic of domination”¹¹ that superiority justifies subordination. The logic of domination is the logic that justifies human domination by gender, race, society, ethnicity, or economic position and is revealed through a dichotomy structure. In other words, everything is either A or not A. More specifically, belonging to A becomes the normative standard of everything, and not falling into the category of A is being the Other. In this dichotomous ideology of the Othering, it is defined as the

¹¹ Karen Warren, “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism,” *Environmental Ethics* 12/3 (Summer 1990): 132.

Othering, whether is being a man or non-man, being a white or non-white, or being a dominator or non-dominator.

Frantz Fanon, who developed the discourse on postcolonialism, also insists that colonialism is a systemic denial of the Others and refuses to allow any human attribute and always makes the subordinated repeat the question of who I really am.¹² The Othering, a systematic negation of the colonists pointed out by Fanon goes beyond the political dimension and dominates the so-called Third World countries through a Western-centered intellectual system. In this manner, the concept of Othering can be seen as an attempt to highlight the voices of the marginalized people by revealing the structure of the center/marginalized and insisting on the decentralization of the center.

Albert Memmi analyzes the characteristics of the Othering into three points: first, the Other, such as the concept of Western/non-Western, is always regarded as Not, lack, deficiency, and insufficiency. Second, the Other is defined as an opaque being with opaque humanity. And finally, the Other is considered part of an anonymous aggregate, not an individual. In other words, the Other is understood as a group, not as an individual being, and they are not regarded as individual beings who have each unique characteristic but as similar beings.¹³ In this way, the West and the East, which the geographical distinctions classified by Western, are perceived to have, in effect, biological or metaphysical differences. Moreover, creating the Other in this way becomes a solid objective and normative truth in the process of knowledge. Therefore, a clear

¹² Frantz Fanon, *대지의 저주받은 자들* [Les Damnés de la Terre], trans. 남경태 (Seoul: Greenbee, 2010), 201.

¹³ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 82-3.

perception of how the subordinated were categorized as the Other in certain ways should precede.

c. Hybridity

Another important concept in postcolonial theory is “hybridity.” Homi H. Bhabha coined the term “hybridity,” which means that the dominant and the subordinated alike experience confusion in a colonial situation. In fact, “the postcolonial hybridity is produced by empire: by direct invasion, violation, and rape, or by the indirect subjection that stimulates survivalist strategies of mimicry and appropriation.”¹⁴ And hybridity prohibits the subordinated to become completely the same as the dominant beyond becoming assimilated, and at the same time the dominant forces the subordinated to become alike in part and makes them be hybrid.¹⁵

In this manner, the term ‘hybridity’ is deeply related to identity and can have at least three meanings from a biological, ethnic, and cultural perspective. The first meaning can be the offspring of two different generic components. The second meaning can be understood that people could have access to two or more ethnic identities.¹⁶ And last but not least, hybridity reflects the colonial realities between the relationship of the colonized and the colonizer’s cultures. Western and European-centric dominant culture forcefully implanted in and infiltrated into the colonized culture. It approaches the colonized culture as claiming essentialism and uniformity of identity. The colonized culture assimilated by the dominant Western/Euro-centric culture; and thus, “both alike but different”¹⁷ culture is created. Hybridity refuses “a homogenous purity” and identifies that “cultures never exists as a purely independent pre-invaded local

¹⁴ Keller, Nausner, and Rivera, eds., *Postcolonial Theologies*, 13.

¹⁵ Homi H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 86.

¹⁶ Easthope, “Homi Bhabha, Hybridity and Identity, Or Derrida vs. Lacan,” 145-46.

¹⁷ Kim-Cragg, *Story and Song*, 37.

culture and that they do not remain a purely colonial entity either.”¹⁸ Therefore, hybridity can be a third space that contains the fluid nature of identity.

Bhabha insists that there is a space “in-between the designations of identity and that this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.”¹⁹ This in-between space is for hybridity, which can be a space for creativity and embracement. In other words, hybridity attacks the racial and cultural ‘purity’ on which colonial rule is based, but at the same time, it is important because it has the potential for political resistance. In this respect, hybridity is deeply related to the next term, the Third Space.

d. Third Space

The Third Space is a space of hybridity that “creates a space recognizing a partial culture as having its own integrity and wholeness... [and] reflects a reality of inevitable encounters between different cultures and mixed realities as a result.”²⁰ Although the differences or hybridity never simply be celebrated because of the dominant’s invasion or violation in a situation of colonialism, its space of hybridity can be the Third Space that can create a new vision and possibility by resisting the “rules of recognition.”²¹

As the Third Space is not a fixed space, it can be an indeterminate space where cultural hybridity can occur. According to Namsoon Kang, it seems to very useful for Asian theologians to use Bhabha's concept of hybridity – which refers to borderline-crossing and in-between-space

¹⁸ Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1999), 6, quoted in Kim-Cragg, 37.

¹⁹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 4.

²⁰ Kim-Cragg, *Story and Song*, 37-8.

²¹ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 110.

– to find their identity as Asian.²² It is because “the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.”²³ The Third World is “an expanded concept of hybridity [and] the chosen marginality,”²⁴ it is a space of resistance and a possibility that will shed light on the past culture and other neighboring cultures.

In order to create the Third World as a possibility, fruitful, abundant space of a new culture, we should first acknowledge that “all cultures are involved in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic.”²⁵ After that, we have to choose whether this space to be a new creation and hospitality or to be a space of exclusion, discrimination, and disgust. As it will be dealt with later in the section B of this chapter, Jesus has recreated this space into a space of hospitality and the formation of a new relationship. Furthermore, we are invited to this space of re-creation potential.

e. Subaltern

The concept of the subaltern is a term used to describe the power relationship that coined by Gayatri Spivak who is the Indian-born American feminist and postcolonial theorist.²⁶ Spivak uses this term to illuminate the voices, experiences, and history of the lower classes. That is, the subaltern refers to those who are in an unspeakable position and are deprived of the right to speak. In order for subaltern to get out of the subordinated position and become a political

²² Namsoon Kang, “Who/What Is Asian?” in *Postcolonial Theologies*, eds., Keller, Nausner, and Rivera, 115.

²³ Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), 211, quoted in Kang, “Who/What is Asian?” 115.

²⁴ Kang, “Who/What is Asian?” 115.

²⁵ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), xxv.

²⁶ Refer to Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), 66-111.

subject, they must be able to speak their own story in their own language. Therefore, Spivak's aim is to 'talk' to the lower classes instead of re-presenting or describing them in order to liberate them from oppression and subjugation.²⁷

Especially, in her representative article – “Can the Subaltern Speak?” – she reveals that women in the Third World are double oppressed by Western imperialism and the male patriarchal system and is interested in how to recreate the voices of oppressed Third World women. Spivak argues that we should have a criticism of silence rather than trying to find the voices of the lower classes in a situation where the history of the lower classes does not exist.²⁸ In other words, we should engage in different ways in the history of imperialism and its impact beyond simply recognizing that the lower classes cannot speak. In fact, it is desirable for the lower classes to speak out on its own, but it faces many limitations in social structure and reality. Therefore, it is the responsibility of intellectuals to talk to lower classes in order to discourse on the realistic situation of lower classes.²⁹

In addition, Spivak argues that it is necessary to examine the historical nature of the Third World in detail. If only a simple 'difference' is noted, there is a risk of unintentionally using the marginalized to strengthen the center. Therefore, we should recognize that the subaltern cannot speak under the present imperialism and hierarchal social structure,³⁰ should deconstruct a social structure that is bound to be silenced, should criticize silence in its structure, and produce a

²⁷ Jongsung Park, *탈식민주의에 대한 성찰* [Introspection on Postcolonialism] (Gyeonggi: Salim, 2006), 60-1.

²⁸ Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, *탈식민주의 이론* [An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory], trans. Moonhwan Kim (Seoul: Moonye Publishing, 2004), 331-32.

²⁹ Haesook Tae, *탈식민주의와 페미니즘* [Postcolonialism and Feminism] (Seoul: The center for Women's Culture and Theory, 2001), 120.

³⁰ Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” 104.

practice of what voices and what consciousness the subaltern should speak with their own voice. In this regard, the five aspects of Iris M. Young's oppression will give us a new perspective to interpret the oppression in terms of the social and cultural aspects.

2. Five Faces of Oppression

Iris M. Young articulates Five Faces of Oppression in her book, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.³¹ The word 'oppression' Young claims are not just about physical oppression. It is about the difficulty or deprivation experienced psychologically can also be oppression, and only when one pays attention to these various aspects of oppression will one be able to understand this discourse well. And it is of great significance in that it analyzes the problem of oppression in terms of social structure. For instance, there are will women who are discriminated against on social level, even if every single man respects women and does not discriminate against them. Therefore, in this case, effort to change the social structure itself will be more effective than criticizing individual man. In addition, oppression becomes a group problem, distinguishing the Other. In other words, when A oppresses B, we should be regarded that the group to which A belongs to oppresses the group to which B belongs to. It is because when we see oppression as a group problem, we can see the process of distinguishing between the way discrimination occurs and the Other.

Then, what are the Five Faces of Oppression that Young points out? The first face of oppression is "exploitation." She argues that "The central insight expressed in the concept of exploitation, then, is that this oppression occurs through a steady process of the transfer of the

³¹ Refer to Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

results of the labor of one social group to benefit another.”³² What Young says is the economic aspect of oppression, which is also understood as a matter of group. For example, a man’s position, power, or wealth occurs because women provide labor. It can be said exploitation because women are not paid for their labor. This can be true of class or race issues beyond gender issues.

The second face of oppression is “marginalization.” Young says marginalization is the most dangerous form of oppression. It is because certain groups of people cannot participate in social life and are exposed to the problem of poverty. For this reason, Young particularly emphasizes is welfare. In addition, Young points out two negative consequences of marginalization: first, providing welfare can result in depriving another group of rights and freedom. Second, even if material poverty is somewhat alleviated by welfare, individuals are deprived of the opportunity to exercise their abilities within a socially agreed meaning. Besides, the problem of marginalization also causes emotional damage such as alienation, humiliation, helplessness, and loss.³³

The third face of oppression is “powerlessness.” Young points out the problem of professional labor’s exploitation and being exploited between capitalists and non-professional people, as she insists “Professional labor either involves exploitative transfers to capitalists or supplies important conditions for such transfers.”³⁴ The process of becoming a professional involves oppression, and it costs a lot of money to carry out that profession. Professional jobs also have some kind of privilege in addition to the realm of the profession. These privileges can

³² Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 49.

³³ Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 53-5.

³⁴ Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 56.

be a means of oppression for other groups. In other words, in terms of a structural problem, women have a harder time becoming a professional than men, and a certain race still has a harder time getting a professional job.

The fourth face of oppression is “cultural imperialism.” If the five aspects of oppression mentioned above are further emphasizing the material aspects, cultural imperialism, which emerges as universalization of the experience and culture of the ruling group, deals with more epistemological aspects. She articulates, “The culturally dominated undergo a paradoxical oppression, in that they are both marked out by stereotypes and at the same time rendered invisible.”³⁵ That is, the culture of the ruling group can be developed into a kind of norm through the process of universalization to suppress other cultures. Interesting thing is that the members of the dominant group internalize the characteristics represented by this group, and the problem here is that the experience and understanding of the controlling group are oppressed. In other words, the culture of the middle class in the West is perceived as universal, and its value is internalized as normative.

Finally, the fifth face of oppression is “violence.” Young interprets the problem of violence as a matter of social justice as well as physical violence. This is a problem that should not be understood simply at the individual level. Young criticizes violence as a social act and explains psychological problems such as identity crisis as a problem of violence.³⁶

In summary, Young articulates various aspects of oppression in the social and cultural structure. The five faces of oppression are ‘exploitation,’ ‘marginalization,’ ‘powerlessness,’ ‘cultural imperialism,’ and ‘violence.’ Her criticism is not limited to the individual level but

³⁵ Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 59.

³⁶ Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 62.

beyond the epistemological level as well as social structure. Her insight is meaningful in that it helps to recognize oppression in terms of social structure and group and that new changes can be sought in terms of community.

3. Essential Dimensions and Tasks of the Postcolonial Feminist Theology

Some scholars insist on the importance and positive potential of the postcolonial feminist theology in order to analyze binary social structure and religious oppression. For example, Kang insists that a postcolonial analysis combined with a feminist analysis helps people to see the oppression of the colonial mentality of domination and control.³⁷ Likewise, Kwok Pui-lan asserts that the most important contribution of postcolonial feminist theology is to “reconceptualize the relation of theology and empire through the multiple lenses of gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and so forth.”³⁸

Based on Kang and Kwok’s arguments, we may consider four essential dimensions of postcolonial feminist theology. First, it offers significant discursive tools that are able to analyze how oppression affects the concrete lives of minority groups. Second, it offers strategies of resistance to and critique of imperial powers and how power can complicate religion. Third, it scrutinizes how the marginalized and oppressed people come to internalize the oppressive values and systems of colonialism of hegemonic power. Fourth, it helps people to reconstruct theological discourse and practice with critical sensitivity to the issues of colonizing paradigms and power.

³⁷ Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 109.

³⁸ Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination & Feminist Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 144.

In addition, Kang and Kwok articulate five tasks of functions of postcolonial feminist theology. 1) To deconstruct the Western construction of identity that produces an exclusive binary fixity. Postcolonial feminist theology must move beyond essentialized identity toward a hybrid identity that recognizes hybridity as “a significant space of creative transformation and liberation from the colonizing systems and values” and “for resistance to the unitary fixity of colonial paradigm and discourse.”³⁹ Kwok also mentions, “To accentuate diversity, Asian feminist theologians must pay acute attention to the issue of economic disparity among women, both regionally and nationally. ... They have to theologize from the perspective of both the oppressed and the oppressor at the same time.”⁴⁰

2) To move beyond Euro/US centrism in the construction of theological power and knowledge. Kang insists that postcolonial feminist theology much engage “the universals of justice, equality, freedom, and human rights without any colonial, imperialist, or Eurocentric implications.”⁴¹ 3) To pay careful attention to the marginalized. We need to think with the marginalized and think beyond the Euro/US characterized by the colonizing paradigm. Kang argues postcolonial feminist theology helps people to develop a double mode of seeing that places one not only in the center, but also in the margin.⁴² 4) To seek progressive affirmation of others. Kwok articulates, for instance, many Asian feminist theologians have yet “to find ways to join with the efforts of uneducated and lower-class women in order to bring about societal transformation.”⁴³ In order to become a mature theological movement, postcolonial feminist

³⁹ Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 123.

⁴⁰ Kwok Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2000), 41.

⁴¹ Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 125.

⁴² Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 126.

⁴³ Pui-lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, 42.

theology must continue to bring in new voices. 5) To deconstruct theological discourses that produces and sacralizes imperial power of the religious heritage such as scripture, tradition, doctrine, and creed. Resistance and liberation of Postcolonial feminist discourse begins with a question of invisible and unspoken colonial centers of androcentric, heterosexual, and white normativity, i.e. white-hetero-patriarchy.

In this sense, in order to do postcolonial feminist theology, Kang asserts that we have to practice '*Border-Traversing*' which is a de-colonizing process that moves beyond the "various colonizing borders of discrimination, exclusion, dehumanization of people toward the world of decolonization, deimperialization, and justice."⁴⁴ Likewise, Chandra Mohanty mentions that antiracist and internationalist feminism fosters "the most principled way to cross borders" that is "to decolonize knowledge and practice anticapitalist critique."⁴⁵ Therefore, postcolonial feminist theology is about decolonizing and life-giving processes in our everyday lives that bring about a transformation of self, community, and governance structures.

In the light of the definition of postcolonial feminist theology, now we need to explore how the bible, which is the fundamental guide of life for the Christians, is inheriting the imperial ideologies and how hierarchical and male-centered theologians and pastors misinterpreted and forwarded it. Therefore, I will revisit Jesus' story in the Gospel from the postcolonial feminist theological perspective in the next section.

⁴⁴ Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology*, 129.

⁴⁵ Chandra Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.

B. Deconstructing Imperial Ideologies that are Embedded in the Bible

1. Scholarly Perspectives

In here, what we should focus on is that “until the mid-eighteenth-century Orientalists were Biblical scholars.”⁴⁶ This historical fact can serve as a clue to analyze how Christian faith and practice have been involved in building the ideology of Orientalism, that is, “Othering.”

According to R. S. Sugirtharajah, postcolonialism is about a discourse that engages with and against colonialism⁴⁷ and is about “controlling ideas and values”⁴⁸ especially from a Western-inspired norm. In this manner, he articulates that postcolonial biblical criticism is about “exploring who is entitled to tell stories and who has the authority to interpret them”⁴⁹ while mainstream biblical critics usually pay more attention to their questions about the text, so that they are driven by Reformation and Enlightenment agendas.⁵⁰ In this regards, he points out that today’s postcolonialism is questioning not only about the bible text itself, but also about “the anthropological insights, scientific theories, theological presuppositions, racial stereotypes, and linguistic maneuverings, which legitimized and were central to colonialism and now legitimize neo-colonialism.”⁵¹

Likewise, Musa Dube mentions, ‘why we need postcolonial *feminist* interpretations of the Bible’ in her book, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*.⁵² She articulates, “As

⁴⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 51, quoted in Kim-Cragg, *Story and Song*, 28.

⁴⁷ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2012), 123.

⁴⁸ Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 134.

⁴⁹ Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 3.

⁵⁰ Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 3.

⁵¹ Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 135.

⁵² Musa Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2012), 23.

[Josiah] Strong asserts that the English language is saturated with Christian ideas, it follows that English thinking, its ethics, and its perception of reality are heavily informed by biblical ideas. ... [and] we cannot divorce the biblical text from informing and inspiring their imperialist violence.”⁵³ In this regard, Dube mentions about Laura Donaldson who points out how Western feminist reading practices maintain the imperial rhetorical strategies of subjugation. Novels and movies in the nineteenth and twentieth-century have systematically bracketed imperial textual constructions of subjugation. In this way, she argues “feminist readings also have bracketed the challenge of exposing and critiquing imperialist ideologies in cultural texts, hence participating in their maintenance.”⁵⁴ In a similar way, Laura Donaldson and Kwok Pui-lan also articulate in *Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse*, feminist scholars who are interested in postcolonial studies address race, gender, and sexuality, but they ignore religion and gender “as an integral part of their analysis.”⁵⁵ And they mention that this presents a “danger of replicating the colonial gaze in the name of serving a feminist agenda.”⁵⁶ Therefore, Dube insists that feminist biblical readers must also become decolonizing readers those who recognize patriarchal oppression and its methods and strategies of subjugation in cultural texts, identify the patterns of resistance of the subjugated, and be aware of the use of the female gender in colonial discourse.⁵⁷

Boyung Lee also argues along with Ferando Segovia that first, feminist biblical readers should analyze the world of the biblical text such as the Near East or the Mediterranean Basin where the bible was written and edited, which helps people better understand the world of the

⁵³ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 5.

⁵⁴ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 25.

⁵⁵ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 2.

⁵⁶ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 3.

⁵⁷ Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 42-3.

text while also demythologizing the bible and contextualizing it. Second, these readers should examine the world of modernity that dominates biblical readings and interpretations and how Western imperialism is presented as *the* model for of Christian living.⁵⁸ As Dube articulates, two-thirds of the women in the world need to decolonize their inherited colonial education systems, languages, literary canon, reading methods, and the Christian religious tradition because this decolonizing process creates a space to recover the insights of ordinary women readers and it is able to liberate biblical scholars and feminists from their unexamined and internalized colonialism and neocolonialism.⁵⁹ Finally, feminist biblical readers should consider the experience of other contemporary women readers because imperialism and colonialism are never imposed or accepted passively. Lee insists that by identifying how contemporary readers engage with the Bible and interpretations, we must place the Bible in the context of reader's life situations and investigate the dynamics of the center and the margin within their bodies and minds.⁶⁰

In summary, a postcolonial feminist interpretation of the bible offers the following. First, an opportunity for people to analyze the symbolic meaning and location of women in the text and how that symbolic meaning and location relate to class interests, modes of production, power dynamics, and colonial domination. Second, it facilitates the reconstruction of biblical women as counternarrative. Third, postcolonial feminist interpretation of the bible enables an examination of the mainstream interpretations of the bible and whether particular biblical scholar's

⁵⁸ Boyong Lee, "When the Text is the Problem: A Postcolonial Approach to Biblical Pedagogy," *Religious Education* 102, no. 1 (February 2007): 45-46.

⁵⁹ Kwok Pui-lan, "Making the Connections: Postcolonial Studies and Feminist Biblical Interpretation," in *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 45-46.

⁶⁰ Lee, "When the Text is the Problem," 47.

interpretations support a colonizing ideology and imperial projects or contribute to a decolonizing perspective that supports liberation from imperial projects. Fourth, it helps subvert Western patriarchal interpretations of the bible by engaging ordinary and nonacademic women. Ordinary women readers are not dominated by a particular textual approach, but instead take a communal and participatory approach of interpretation. Finally, it enables the identification of politics and poetics (in the biblical text) of location so that people have an opportunity to reinterpret the bible in a way that relates more directly to their lives and experiences.⁶¹ Therefore, a postcolonial feminist interpretation of the bible offers a sense of liberation and decolonization of the biblical text for those who are culturally and systemically experiencing patriarchal, hierarchal, and gender oppression as Asian Christian women.

2. Approaches of the Postcolonial and Feminist Biblical Interpretation

We have dealt with that Christianity and the interpretive methods of the Bible are rooted in patriarchal, Western-centered, and imperialism. As a fragmentary example, the cornerstone of Minjung Theology, Byung-Mu Ahn points out that the understanding of Jesus spread to Koreans by Western missionaries was not based on the Bible, but the doctrine of missionaries. Therefore, Korean Christians became the most enthusiastic reader and blind reader of the Bible.⁶²

Likewise, non-Western countries have been greatly influenced by European-American hermeneutic traditions. Musa W. Dube points out that current biblical criticism is still under the

⁶¹ Pui-lan, "Making the Connections," 48-50.

⁶² Ahn Byung-Mu, "The Korean Church's Understanding of Jesus: An Historical Review," *International Review of Mission* 74 (1985): 81.

control of imperial-centered countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the United States.⁶³

In this regard, alternative biblical reading and its interpretation are required. Alternative biblical reading does not necessarily mean overlooking the European-American biblical and hermeneutic approaches. Rather, it is required to practice reading that considers the culture, economic, and social situations, or issues of each country. Through this alternative biblical interpretation, I hope the postcolonial perspective provides an appropriate perspective on colonialism, imperialism, patriarchal, and hierarchical system, and its impact. Furthermore, I hope it will be an opportunity to examine the ideological and political topics implied in the bible and its interpretation.

a. A Postcolonial Interpretation of Luke 21:1-4

Luke 21:1-4 illustrates the widow's offering. The traditional interpretation of this text is to argue that the 'poor widow' appearing in the text is a sample of discipleship.⁶⁴ Even among scholars who attempt to interpret the Bible for women's liberation, there are those who evaluate the behavior of poor widows as 'positive.'⁶⁵ This attempt can be said to be an attempt to idealize the behavior of poor widows. In other words, it is interpreted as a sample of a person who is sacrificial, devoted, trusted, and reverent, in contrast to the rich and high social status scribes and Pharisees. More specifically, this traditional interpretation emphasizes Christian discipleship

⁶³ Musa W. Dube, "'Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations' (Matt 28:19a): A Postcolonial Perspective on Biblical Criticism and Pedagogy," in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 234.

⁶⁴ S. John Roth, *The Blind, the Lame, and the Poor: Character Types in Luke Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 26, 144.

⁶⁵ Turid Karlsen Seim, "The Gospel of Luke," in *Searching the Scripture: A Feminist Commentary*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza (London: SCM Press, 1995), 741.

and at the same time forces her exemplary sacrifice. However, R. S. Sugirtharajah points out that there is no implication that the poor widow is the ideal disciple. Instead, she is just a poor widow with a miserable appearance. It is because there is no record about the poor widow among Jesus followers or among numerous women who followed him.⁶⁶

Furthermore, traditional interpretations of idealizing the poor and presenting them as exemplary models overlook the miserable reality and situations of the poor and risk perpetuating their poverty and impoverished reality. The poor widow offered her whole property is not because she is humble, kind, and surrender. Rather, the offering of poor widow should be remembered that the suffering she is currently receiving is due to the structural corruption and injustice of social, economic, and religious systems and structure.⁶⁷ Similarly, I will explore one more example in the next section.

b. A Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of Acts 16:16-18

Acts 16:16-18 illustrates the meeting of Paul and a slave girl. The traditional interpretation mostly focuses on Paul and his authority and power, although the text is describing about Paul, his colleagues, a slave girl, and her owners. According to I. Howard Marshall, focusing only on the fate and existence of Paul and his colleagues makes the existence of a slave girl forgotten. In other words, this clearly reveals the traditional interpretative tendency to ignore and overlook the voices of marginalized people such as a slave girl.⁶⁸ The postcolonial interpretation could ask the following questions: why are we more interested in the fate of Paul

⁶⁶ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Asian Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 22-23.

⁶⁷ Addison G. Wright, “The Widows’ Mites: Praise or Lament? A Matter of Context,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (April 1982): 263.

⁶⁸ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 269.

and his colleagues than in the presence of a slave girl? Why cannot a slave girl be placed at the front of biblical interpretation in this text?

In this regard, Gail R. O'Day criticizes that as Paul silences the slave girl, she is forgotten, and her silence turns the story into her owner losing his income. That is, the slave girl completely disappears from the sight of the story. After Paul silenced her, her economic value could not make her return to the slave market, her life becoming better, or converted. Rather, her forced silence by Paul strongly gives her the impression that she is merely an owner's product, and her ontological value is ignored.⁶⁹ In other words, Paul does not invite the slave girl to become a convert or believer, but rather she is treated as a descriptive prop representing God's ability in Paul's ministry.⁷⁰

Evaluation of the Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation

Theological and biblical interpretation tasks must be directed toward life and living. Liberated from traditional biblical interpretation that are fixed and perpetuated must resist against all systems and structures that suppress life and must provide a new direction of life for liberation and finding self-agency.

As we have seen so far, postcolonial discourse is to find hidden voices and figures that are ignored and inferior. It is the main interest in postcolonial biblical interpretation to bring their voices to the forefront of interpretation by providing appropriate analysis and interpretation of the poor and the marginalized. Furthermore, it is necessary to recognize that male-centered and patriarchal cultures and traditional interpretations describe women as beings lacking credit, and

⁶⁹ Gail R. O'Day, "Acts," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 310-11.

⁷⁰ O'Day, "Acts," 311.

that silence is forced, restricted, and excluded. To liberate the poor and oppressed marginalized women from two or three oppression, we should pay attention to their voices and critically think of who, what, and why oppressing them.

The postcolonial biblical interpretation is not an absolute interpretation method that completely liberates all people but is just an alternative interpretive method. However, through postcolonial biblical interpretation, it will be possible to find their voices again by reinterpreting the descriptions of the women and the poor, which have been interpreted oppressively, negatively, and silently.

CHAPTER IV

A NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY AS A TRANSFORMATIVE WAY FOR A LIFE OF LOVE

In chapter IV, I will deal with narrative pedagogy as a fundamental methodology that practices reconciliation between theory and lived experience and empowers marginalized people to reclaim their voices. Particularly, I will explore some essential dimensions of narrative pedagogy that religious education has incorporated and adapted and will identify the possibilities that narrative pedagogy has for the empowerment of marginalized people's self-agency.

A. Religious Education for Transformative Life

Generally, the purpose of education is to help people becoming more fully human.¹ Education begins with a human being to cooperating with neighbors and growing into a person who is helpful in society. In here, the results may differ depending on what purpose the instructor teaches the learner. As Jacques Maritain suggests, education is an essential process to become who we are and to awaken ourselves.²

Then, what does education mean from Christian point of view? Norman De Jong identifies education in terms of Christianity as re-creating and developing a true understanding of God and humans, humans and humans, and humans and the world. In other words, education is a process in which humans grow and develop through human life, that is, knowledge, faith, hope, and love to know God in Christ, and is achieved through mutual cooperation between them.³

¹ James Arthur, *A Christian Education in the Virtues: Character Formation and Human Flourishing* (London: Routledge, 2021), 1.

² Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 2.

³ Norman De Jong, *Education in the Truth*, trans. Chungki Shin (Seoul: Lifebook, 1994), 149.

According to religious educator Jack L. Seymour, it is no exaggeration to say that Christian education began with Jesus' education.⁴ Jesus taught and invited his disciples and countless people to live their true lives. He educated and reminded people to live a new life. After Jesus' death, the disciples and Jesus' followers wrote many letters and Gospels for their faith community to clarify the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection and to encourage people to be faithful in their lives.

As such, religious education forms an identity in a human life and plays an important role in mutual cooperation between humans and humans, humans and nature, and humans and God. In addition, Christian education connects Jesus' life and spirit to our current life, discovers a new direction of life, and enables people to enjoy their own life as faithful people. In here, faithful means to live life following Jesus' value and Jesus' spirit: "Love God and love your neighbors" (Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28).

Since religious education far from places of life is meaningless, then we should ask ourselves what the immediate task of today's society where Christian education is should be carried out. In other words, we need to ask how we, believers and Jesus' followers, love God and love our neighbors and what are the today's challenges and who are our neighbors that we face today. Pointing to today's challenges, such as the extreme gap between the rich and the poor, racism and terrorism, the revival of authoritarian religions, and the struggle over public priorities, Seymour asks what Christian's and faith communities' responsibilities are in personal and world suffering.⁵

⁴ Jack L. Seymour, ed., "Approaches to Christian Education," in *Mapping Christian Education: Approaches to Congregational Learning* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 11.

⁵ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 16.

Seymour argues that in order to be faithful and participating in God's work in today's challenges, we need to reflect on "the brokenness and possibilities in the experiences of our lives, and the social contexts in which they emerge in communities of care and mission that are seeking to be a part of a hope-filled, grace-filled, and inclusive future."⁶ In order to reflect on the social context, a historian of world religions, Wilfred Cantwell Smith's argument of religious life can be said to be quite convincing. He argues that religious life is a "complex interaction" of 1) a religious tradition that has been accumulated in a person's life; 2) a unique personality of each person; 3) a particular environment that happens every day; and 4) transcendental reality where tradition and human life are connected.⁷ In this regard, religious life can be a unique character depending on the contexts, communities, and personalities.

In short, religious education is based on knowledge of tradition, interaction of community's meaning and memory, response to an individual personality, and motivation to move into the world. Therefore, religious education is about a conversation for lives of individuals and faith communities that develops individual and communal spiritual growth, promotes liberation, and reinterprets faith and life. In other words, the primary tasks of religious education are to translate the resources of the bible, to interpret it to apply in our everyday lives, and to empower people to be theological and faithful through a deep connection of faith and life. The important point is that religious education is an inseparable relationship between life and faith. Therefore, religious education is from the issues of life that we struggle to be faithful. Religious education provides an opportunity to know what our lives mean and how to participate in God's love in the midst of life.

⁶ Seymour, *Mapping Christian Education*, 17.

⁷ Seymour, 17.

In this respect, the direction and values of religious education are very important. This is because the results of religious education may differ depending on its direction and values. Since I believe narrative pedagogy plays an important role in religious education, the next section will deal with the importance of narrative pedagogy in religious education.

B. Significance of Narrative Pedagogy in Religious Education

Stories have always been part of the history of humans using language to teach and learn things by identifying and understanding others, and it has existed as a way of imitation to identify them. Hebrew of the Old Testament taught in a way of storytelling, and the biblical reporters' methods also employ story. As Walter Brueggemann points out, the story was a fundamental form of education for the faith of Israel. Moreover, the story of the Bible is a good example of the original structure of education that binds an individual to the community. Thomas Groome also says that all Christians are part of the Christian story. Narrative leads listeners into another life experience of stories. Through this process, they develop the understanding and perception of their own lives. Therefore, I would like to explore the essential dimensions of narrative theology in two points that will help people to reconcile between theory and lived experience and to empower marginalized people to reclaim their voice.

First, narrative is one of the valuable and important theological tools. According to Stanley Hauerwas, "theory is meant to help you know the world without changing the world or yourself, a story is to help you deal with the world by changing it through changing yourself."⁸ Thus, narrative enables people to reflect on their faith experiences and to live out following their faith in their own stories. Meanwhile, Terrence Tilley divides the primary tasks of narrative

⁸ Susan M. Shaw, *Storytelling in Religious Education* (Birmingham and Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1999), 82.

theology into three points. First task is to discover the narrative(s) that form Christian tradition. The second task is to transform the narrative(s) of Christian tradition. And the third task is to proclaim the Good News.⁹ As Tilley's three primary tasks of narrative theology point out, narrative in the Christian faith can engage human beings in a particular, to call to experience and embody biblical stories in lived Christian faith, and to connect to the story and vision of others. In particular, feminist theologians have discovered and continue to discover the necessity to reconstruct the narratives of the Christian tradition, to critically reflect on its original stories and to make use of them for transformation, and to proclaim a redefined Good News through narrative theology.

Second, narrative can shape both the individual's and the community's Christian faith and life. Stories start with experiences, and people construct their experience narratively. Shaw points out stories are an experiential learning process, which involves cognitive and affective aspects, and they touch, challenge, and change our behavior.¹⁰ Thus, both storyteller and listener reconstruct their own experiences into "meaningful patterns and responses."¹¹ James Fowler and Walter Rauschenbusch understand faith as a lived reality, a lifestyle. In this manner, faith is an act of the will, seeing how God works in the world for social justice, and resisting selfish forces. For Bonhoeffer, "people are people of faith ... because of how they choose to live."¹² Therefore, faith cannot be separated from lived experiences, and the experiences can be constructed as a meaningful narrative that forms the individual's and the community's identity and life. Shaw says, "Within the community, individual identity is shaped by one's experience of the life of the

⁹ Shaw, *Storytelling in Religious Education*, 83.

¹⁰ Shaw, x.

¹¹ Shaw, 54.

¹² Shaw, 59.

community, including the stories which the community creates and then passes on as part of a living tradition.”¹³ As Christians live out the story of their community, the story continues to shape the identity of the community because their stories hold their identity.

This leads to the question; how has religious education incorporated and adapted the insights of narrative theology? I will summarize its value and positive possibility into three points.

First, narrative theology is an essential part of religious learning. Shaw points out people can live out stories through passing on the stories, developing new stories, and creating spaces for creative imagination of the stories that are all important for religious learning. As narrative meaningfully reenacts people’s experience, meetings between particular stories and people’s own stories means to share signified experience and to be a process for renewing people’s narrative. Narrative theology leads to a situation in which both biblical context and people’s own context meet in common experience and opens the possibility of communication and interaction. Thus, a religious educator may “facilitate faith development by creating learning experiences in which learners may engage in experiencing and practicing faith in cognitive, affective, and behavioral ways.”¹⁴ Specifically, Christians find their identity in the biblical stories. They learn how to think, feel, and act as a Christian through the biblical stories because their belief arises from participation in the Christian community, and the community rooted in the biblical narratives central to its identity. Therefore, biblical stories offer a significant way of teaching a Christian lifestyle.

¹³ Shaw, *Storytelling in Religious Education*, 72.

¹⁴ Shaw, 77.

Second, narrative theology helps people to transform their lives. Aristotle understands praxis as reflective action that is informed by practical knowledge and skill within tradition, which transforms the meaning of tradition into the present context.¹⁵ The praxis perspective includes social context, which the community stories support both the biblical and life stories. Narrative theology contributes to religious education by facilitating praxis that interconnects Christian tradition, community, and personal lives. As Stone points out, we learn about the story of biblical figures, interpret the meaning of their lives, apply the meaning for our lives, and reenact them for transformation via praxis in different contexts. In this regard, religious education incorporates narrative theology through inviting all people beyond time, culture, region, age, gender to meet their own lives and biblical stories. Therefore, people are able to enrich their own life stories and transform their lives by reenacting it.

Finally, narrative theology in religious education offers a way of change and a renewed vision of the individual and society. Narrative is deeply related to the lived experiences in people's life. Although people actively learn about biblical stories and participate in understanding of the stories, biblical narrative also strongly invites people into its stories and leads changes in the way we perceive the world and ourselves. In this manner, biblical narrative has a power to shape our lives. Through biblical stories, which are remembered within faith community, preserved as the form of narrative, and interpreted, not as a mere historical reconstruction based on no hypotheses or statement of doctrinal principle of the bible, but interpreted in a way in which people can find truthful change of life and a vivid vision for individual and society as well as faith community. If the biblical story was meaningful to the

¹⁵ Jerry H. Stone, "Narrative Theology and Religious Education," in *Theologies of Religious Education* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1995), 263.

early Christian community and reader of the time and was transformative, i.e. it formed and transformed consciousness and life, contemporary narrative theology in religious education may adapt that same function that transforms the consciousness and life of today's community and individual learners of the story by offering change and vision of the individual and community.

In summary, narrative theology has a great significance in religious education, as it is an important theological tool and shapes Christian identity. Basically, the bible consists of various stories from the beginning to the end that enable people to transform on the levels of consciousness, life, and behavior. As people learn the Christian tradition within the biblical stories, apply its meaning to their context, and reenact the biblical stories in their lives, they identify their identity as believers, transform their lifestyle, and bring inner and external changes to themselves, community, and society with vision. Therefore, I believe narrative is valuable and powerful for people, especially for marginalized people in community and society that they re-identify their identity within the biblical narrative and their own stories. In this regard, I will explore how we can apply narrative into religious education and what it would look like for the application in the next section.

C. Six Foundational Approaches to Narrative Pedagogy

A religious educator, Frank Rogers suggests six foundational approaches to narrative pedagogy that enables people to confirm their identity, to practice self-agency, to transmit and receive sacred stories, to establish a sense of vitality that liberates self, and to participates in social changes. Roger's six foundational approaches to narrative pedagogy will be very useful depending on the individual and faith community's situation and needs. In the next paragraph, we will explore each of them with examples.

First, narrative pedagogy teaches “*religious literacy*” which helps people to learn religious stories and to internalize them in their lives. People are able to experience God’s presence in their lives, to renew their identity, and to reclaim their faith heritage through religious stories. Religious literacy seeks three main educational roles. The first role is to help people uphold and learn faith stories that embody their particular faith heritage and identity. The second role is to empower people to understand themselves, God’s word, and their particular place in the world in order to live as God’s faithful people. The third role is to encourage people to have a broader perspective of the world based on faith stories and to participate in their own faith stories.¹⁶

A brief example of religious literacy would be the story of Abraham and his people leaving Egypt. Given the issues around immigration today, this story is very relevant. Abraham traveled to an unfamiliar land following God’s call and directions. As Abraham arrived in the unfamiliar land, he probably was afraid and struggled with family members over the purpose for their journey. Abraham’s story may empower immigrants to reflect upon obedience to God as they reflect on how God cared for Abraham and his people when the family left their familiar land. As stated by Thomas Groome, people converse with their tradition and faith story and make those stories their own through an action and reflection.¹⁷ Therefore, religious literacy approaches enable people to reflect upon their lives and to embody tradition and their current life.

¹⁶ Frank Rogers Jr., *Finding God in the Graffiti: Empowering Teenagers Through Stories* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2011), 21-50.

¹⁷ Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 147.

Second, narrative pedagogy teaches the clarification and confirmation of “*personal identity*.” This leads people to narrate their own life stories by relating to their own cultural and religious stories and God’s stories. Personal identity seeks three educational values: 1) to help people to identify themselves within Christian stories that often embody personal stories and faith stories, 2) to help people to heal as they discover purpose and meaning for their lives, and 3) to embody personal stories and communal stories as meaningful and healing stories through a critical and creative process.¹⁸

A brief example of personal identity would be self-changing experience. One of the members at my church shared his life-changing experience during the meditation time of our Sunday worship service. That time was Easter Sunday. He had just learned from a doctor that his second daughter has rare developmental disorder. As he shared his story about his daughter, he talked about how he used to regard the life of parents who have a handicapped child is hard.

However, he said that he, who now has a handicapped child, did not feel any struggle or difficulty, but rather he is so happy with his two daughters just as they are. So, he felt really sorry for the parents to whom before he had felt so much pity. Furthermore, he said I was reborn and resurrected into a new dad for my daughters.

In hearing this story from this man, this story changed my sense of self. I thought back on how many times I also felt much pity for the parents who have handicapped children just like him. His shared story helped me to identify myself, to navigate my life, and to transform my identity. In a similar way, Anne E. Streaty Wimberly’s work in African American religious education also develops a model of “*story-linking*” that participants creatively in engaging 1)

¹⁸ Rogers, *Finding God in the Graffiti*, 51-73.

people's stories of daily life, 2) the biblical story of creation and redemption, and 3) stories of African American faith exemplars that are noteworthy to facilitate action towards liberation.¹⁹

Third, narrative pedagogy teaches "*contemplative encounter*" that helps people discover themselves through the mirror of textual narrative. This approach has three educational roles: 1) to help people to experience and feel themselves within the sacred stories through imagination, 2) to facilitate change of personal faith and life, and 3) to help people to face themselves and their lives through imagination.²⁰

A story from my own personal experience would be an example of contemplative encounter. During meditation, I saw a tiny fire in the depth of my mind. I suddenly remembered Moses' story of the burning bush. Like Moses, I seemed to hear a voice, "remove the sandals from your feet." I have never had that kind of experience before, so I wanted to know what it meant. After a time of reflection, I finally thought that it might be an expression of a strong desire to know and experience God more deeply.

Peter Pitzele's approach to the bible is bibliodrama such as "psychodrama, drama therapy, literary theory, feminism, and the mythopoeic of the men's movement,"²¹ which is a tool for teaching the bible and for building a new learning community. His work toward contemplative encounter helps people to be aware of themselves, to experience themselves within the sacred stories, and to integrate their insight into their personal life by imagination and meditation.

¹⁹ Wimberly, *Soul Stories*, 40.

²⁰ Rogers, *Finding God in the Graffiti*, 74-97.

²¹ Peter Pitzele, *Scripture Windows: Toward a Practice of Bibliodrama* (Los Angeles: Alef Design Group, 1998), 18.

Fourth, narrative pedagogy teaches “*critical reflection*” that helps people to recognize cultural narratives that are related to gender, race, power, violence, God, good or bad, and the “others” that shapes human consciousness. Critical reflection seeks three main educational values: 1) to recognize cultural and religious stories that influence and shape human consciousness, lifestyle, values, and beliefs, 2) to identify ideologies and connotations of cultural narratives, and 3) to transform people into a new person by liberating themselves from cultural and ideological oppression.²²

An example of critical reflection would be my experience with my little son. My son really likes to read books. We read several books before bedtime every night. Some books have gender, cultural, and ideological conceptions within the stories. For instance, white is beautiful, adults abandon children (Hansel and Gretel), a witch preys on young children, and it is surely a good thing that the enemy is dead. Thus, I try to recreate stories with my son to help him to navigate perceptions of race, violence, gender and age discrimination. For example, Jack Zipes’ teaching that he gives children an opportunity to finish a part of story, as they want to illustrate. As Herbert Kohl says that although everyone cannot be a Rosa Parks,²³ we can imagine ourselves as participants in the boycott, critical reflection approach is valuable in transforming cultural narratives that shape human’s consciousness and to reconsider new values that promote good communal purpose.

Fifth, narrative pedagogy teaches “*creative vitality*” that is about life giving, renewing, and energizing stories for healing people. Creative vitality offers personal spirituality in faith

²² Rogers, *Finding God in the Graffiti*, 98-123.

²³ Refer to an article, “What’s Wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth” by Herbert Kohl in *The Politics of Children’s Literature*.

through various art forms or stories. Creative vitality pursues three educational values: 1) to introduce various kinds of art forms that use their own culture and tradition, 2) to nurture and encourage people to identify themselves in a creative way and to develop self-expression, and 3) to allow people to cheer up and rejoice in their creativity through public performance.²⁴

Daniel Judah Sklar's work is a good example of creative vitality. He shares his own experience with children that he works with creatively by using different media such as videotapes and radio plays. Creative vitality helps people to identify their truth and express it in creative ways such as music, dance, play, painting, or storytelling. It engages others into one communal, valuable, and creative narrative and can be vitalized, energized, and healed.²⁵

Finally, narrative pedagogy teaches for "*societal empowerment*" that helps people to recognize social issues and to pursue justice to be restorative individually and also communally. Societal empowerment seeks three educational values: 1) to invite all participants into the community by raising awareness of social issues. 2) To create narrative with problematic social issues, then think critically and practice arbitration, and 3) to transform fundamentally their communities.²⁶

Norma Bowles' case in which she facilitated theater performances by queer street youth would be an example of societal empowerment approach. As she is a theater artist, she wanted to monitor all the people who are involved in the project, especially queer street youth who struggle against homophobia. She dealt with empowerment issues with the intention to make a liberating socio-political impact. Although she and her team tried to present their play in many ways, she

²⁴ Rogers, *Finding God in the Graffiti*, 124-55.

²⁵ Refer to Daniel Sklar's *Playmaking* (Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 2007).

²⁶ Rogers, *Finding God in the Graffiti*, 156-82.

said it did not “transform the world into a safe and loving place for gay and lesbian youth.

However, ... we look for vital signs and vital changes. I can see a myriad of ways the youth have influenced the lives they touched.”²⁷ Finally, the play changed her dad’s perspective and way of thinking. Like Bowles’s example, societal empowerment approach liberates people from oppression by exposing the social issues in their community.

Consequently, we have explored six foundational approaches to narrative pedagogy in this section, as well as their related examples. Moreover, we discovered that each foundational approach has its own attributes, roles, and impacts on the individual and the faith community. This means that six foundational approaches can be adapted to the circumstances and needs of the individual and faith community. This also can be developed and facilitated for them. In other words, narrative pedagogy and its approaches offer many possibilities to reidentify individual and communal identity, to radically transform their lives and further their community and society. Following that, I will explore what role narrative plays for marginalized people and how to empower them as self-agencies in the next section.

D. Empowerment of Marginalized People’s Self-agency through Narrative

Narrative has the power to transform a person’s life and thinking. If so, I would like to discuss three major themes and influences of the narrative that allow marginalized people to regain their identity and voice.

1. Narrative as Liberation

One’s story is closely linked to a particular tradition. For example, Anne Wimberly identifies and develops a concept of *Story-linking*. She shows how the African American

²⁷ Norma Bowles and Daniel-Raymond Nadon, eds., *Staging Social Justice: Collaborating to Create Activist Theatre* (IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), 163.

tradition is linked to Christian stories. Stories are created within oneself and experience of one's tradition. When the stories are shared, their stories can be identified as their story and also can be dealt with as a new story.

Wimberly introduces the story of African Americans from a liberation and vocational perspective; for instance, she chose a particular bible passage such as Psalm 139. After participants read the passage together, they became the psalmist, and then they recited the psalm from their own perspective. The participants felt, moved, and received some kind of insights from each other through actively and creatively participating in the bible story. Her approach to reading the bible from a liberation perspective continues as their (the African American community) own confession of liberation.

She points out the concept of Story-linking in four ways: 1) to engage in the everyday story, 2) to participate in the Christian faith story in the bible, 3) to engage in Christian faith stories from the African American heritage, and 4) to participate in Christian ethical decision making. Wimberly connects personal story, community story, biblical story, and faith story at the individual, the community, and the social level. Story weaves community members together spatially. There is also a temporal weaving or connecting. The stories provide a continuation that connects past, present, and the future. Also, practical and behavioral activity are touched in this process.

In other words, Wimberly argues that there is a connection between the tradition of the bible, present context, and African American heritage from a liberation perspective. In specific, she tries to interpret the bible from a freedom and liberation perspective and to adapt that

meaning into concrete, empirical, practical, and reflective praxis. Her work introduces the possibility to liberate women by linking their own context and story and the biblical story.²⁸

2. Narrative as Shared-Praxis

Shared-praxis occurs within community. Narrative of community continues to invite people to participate in community's stories and renews the individual's narrative. Narrative is a significant method that connects the story of experience from the past to the present, and from the present to the future and also shapes individual and community's faith.

Thomas Groome's goal of Christian education is *Shared-Praxis*. For Groome, praxis has three aspects that are active, reflective, and creative and which unify in people's present praxis, which means "way of life" and "knowing" that is existential life of agent-subjects.²⁹ Shared-praxis is consisted of five elements that are present behavior, critical reflection, dialogue, story of Christian community, and vision of Christian community from the story.

Groome suggests five movements for action of Shared-praxis: 1) Naming/Expressing "*Present Praxis*", 2) critical reflection on present action, 3) making accessible Christian story and vision, 4) dialectical hermeneutic to appropriate Christian story/vision to participant's stories and vision, and 5) decision/response for lived Christian faith.³⁰ We learn that for Groome, story is narrative of the shared-life and vision within community. Christian tradition, biblical stories, and Christian community's story become today's story of faith community as vision and critical reflection. Groome pursues practical and shared knowledge. This knowledge is gained by critical reflection of self and the process of gaining this knowledge starts from the vision by the stories

²⁸ Wimberly, *Soul Stories*, 18.

²⁹ Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 136-38.

³⁰ Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 146-48.

of faith community. At the same time, this vision is as one's own story and one's own vision. Through the process of reflecting on the story, Christian tradition, the individual, and the community can be united, and individual and community links the past, present, and the future, as the present stories. Theology constructs the living story of the community. The reason that narrative can be theology is narrative can recreate events of the community as stories. Narrative promotes imagination. Shared stories strengthen communal interrelationship.

3. Narrative as Empowerment

Dori Baker introduces Girlfriend Theology that is a process of bringing the stories of adolescent girls and adult women, when they share God-talk in their everyday lives. Her work facilitates the practice of religious education as theological reflection and testimony. As Baker brings varied models of theological reflection such as feminist/womanist/mujerista theology, she develops useable and generative religious education for adolescent girls and adult women.

In Baker's book *Doing Girlfriend Theology*, we learn about her four kinds of pedagogical movements: 1) sharing stories of our daily experiences, 2) reflection on feelings, emotions, and others, which surrounded the experiences, 3) reflection on theological questions of the meaning of story and God, and 4) going forth that may transform their lives through the first three movements. In particular, she invites religiously, racially, ethnically diverse groups of adolescent girls to engage in God-talk. In this regard, her work enriches adolescent girls' theological voices across religious and cultural borders. Furthermore, she advocates her pedagogy with adolescent boys who face the violence and rigidity of hyper-masculinity reinforced by media outlets as changing the name from 'girlfriend theology' to 'story theology'. Baker's work offers a powerful

model for embodiment the lives of young women and empowers not only women's consciousness and life, but also men's lives.³¹

Likewise, Evelyn Parker points out the spirituality of adolescent girls by sharing how she struggle to make sense of her experiences of racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism from a perspective of belief in God. She includes various social locations and ethnic groups and their stories such as African American, Asian American, European American, Latina, and Native American girls in her book, *The Sacred Selves of Adolescent Girls*. As she introduces and interprets the life stories of oppression, she tries to listen and dialogue with the adolescent girls in order to understand how they make sense of their faith. Understanding the adolescent girls' lived-experiences of racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism is very important because it informs and shapes their beliefs in God and even their identity. Parker says that their "belief, values, and practices intersect with their experiences of racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism in ways that influence their unique ways of knowing and doing."³² Through sharing their own life stories, she envisions to help the young girls to become aware of unjust society, to be resilient from the violence and suffering, and to think critically that they realize themselves as an agent-subject in their present context and develop their spirituality. In this manner, her work gives significant possibility that shared story empowers the adolescent girls to live, as they are who God loves and created and strengthens their sacredness, spirituality.

In summary, narrative has significant roles as liberation, shared-praxis, and empowerment. Through integration of African American heritage, biblical stories, and Christian

³¹ Refer to Dori Grinenko Baker's *Doing Girlfriend Theology: God-Talk with Young Women* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005).

³² Evelyn Parker, *The Sacred Selves of Adolescent Girls: Hard Stories of Race, Class, and Gender* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 8.

tradition, Wimberly redefined the truthful meaning of the traditional stories that liberates African American women. On the one hand, Groome emphasizes shared-praxis that shows how shared story is powerful for both individual and community that offer transformation and vision. Finally, Baker and Parker articulate how the stories can empower the adolescent girls, adult women, and even men through showing their own experiences of oppression in society. I believe those examples are valuable for the religious education that enables marginalized people to make their own voice, to transform themselves and others, to live out as self-agency, and to develop the spirituality in God.

E. Narrative as Establishing a Self-identity and Empowering One Another

The purpose of religious education is to help people discover the meaning and purpose of their lives through God's love. It offers them autonomy and independence as subjects living with the Holy Spirit in them. Furthermore, it is to have God's love and to partner with neighbors so that God's Kingdom can be realized through their relationships.

In this regard, Letty Russell describes about establishing one's own identity and empowering one another as 'partnership and steward,'³³ Maria Harris as 'subjectivity and the leading role in re-creating the world,'³⁴ and Anne Wimberly as vocation that liberates 'self' and 'others.'³⁵ In other words, after establishing one's identity and liberating themselves, they also can empower one another, can be steward for the liberation of others, can lead the role in re-creating the world, and can be a person who has a vocation for the liberation of others. As a

³³ Letty Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster Press, 1993), 26-27.

³⁴ Maria Harris, *Women and Teaching: Themes for a Spirituality of Pedagogy* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 3-6.

³⁵ Wimberly, *Soul Stories*, 94-95.

result, as they become the subject of their lives, their interest can finally turn to others and to God. It is to restore the image of God and to be partners with God and neighbors to realize an equal and hospitable kingdom of God.

Identifying self-identity in God enables people to experience those three things about themselves: 1) earn the knowledge of themselves who stay in God's love, 2) enjoy the freedom through liberation, and 3) recognize one's vocation. The 'I' in God eventually leads to self-positive, forms a true identity, and moves toward others.

The content of education for this can be the narrative of 'myself' obtained from my past, present, and future while reflecting on myself first, and the narrative of other women and other, and the narrative of the bible. Through this process, people can objectify themselves, aiming for others, and meeting God in those relationships.

The method of education can be said to be the sharing of narratives. Through sharing the narrative, the speaker faces her or his past, present, and future and reveals herself or himself to others. The listener who listens to the speaker's narrative encounters the stories of the past, present, and future, which were unconscious within her or him, and gets our responses and enlightenment in relation to God by listening to the narratives of their colleagues. In other words, through narratives, the speaker objectifies herself of himself and experiences liberation from conventional thinking or tradition as she or he approaches others. And listeners gain wisdom and enlightenment through reflection. Through the narrative, the speaker is deeply connected to herself and himself, and finds the listener, who listens to the narrative, and God's will in it. Therefore, we realized that there is speaking and listening in the narrative. In this process, there is face-to-face with one another and mutual conversation with each other.

What we can get from narratives is that we can explore, contemplate, and apply enlightenment to life as Christians. This means we ask who we are, how we live in a faith community, what choices we should make, and how we understand the purpose of our lives as we face daily crises and experience. In this respect, Wimberly argues that it is important for individuals to discover their own identity, to realize the wise way they live as Christians and help others, and to liberate others as well as themselves.³⁶

So far, we have discussed the definition and role of education and the significance of narratives in the field of religious education. Additionally, we have discussed narrative as liberation, shared-praxis, and empowerment. By dealing with six foundational narrative approaches, we also examined the possibility of introducing narratives suited to the needs of each individual and faith community. In addition, we learned that narrative enables people to identify self-identity and to empower one another. And this process helps people to realize God's will in their relationship. Additionally, we also dealt with the possibility of narratives in which those who are structurally and ideologically oppressed in society liberate themselves from internalized classism, imperialism, and patriarchal ideology.

In the next chapter, I will introduce good examples of three Korean church communities that build a community based on the values of God's kingdom ("Love God and love neighbors") beyond the ideology of the world, establish self-identity as child of God through good use of the functions of narratives, and empower each other.

³⁶ Wimberly, *Soul Stories*, xiii.

CHAPTER V

A CASE STUDY: THREE EGALITARIAN KOREAN CHURCHES FROM POSTCOLONIAL AND NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Recently, I discovered Korean churches named Yega, Jeonju Saenuri, and Hongdae Dining Churches. Unlike many conservative and traditional Korean churches that have strong patriarchal and hierarchical ideologies, these three churches establish a strong identity as God's children who love God and love one another and empower one another through the narrative. Even though they had not studied postcolonial feminist theology or narrative pedagogy in academia, they already embody the values of these academic values in their own individual and collective lives. I believe that their attempt to connect their identity as children of God with the love of Christ, which is embodied in their actual lives, will be a good example for traditional Korean Christians today as well as for other Christians around the world. I will therefore introduce these three churches in the next section.

A. Brief Information about the Three Churches

Firstly, Yega Church can be considered the representative church of these three churches. In 1998, Yega officially began its journey as a branch of the Presbyterian Republic of Korea (PROK, one of the Korean protestant denominations) with the desire to embody the practices of Jesus, Paul, and the first and second century Christian churches. Yega was founded on the belief that Jesus, Paul, and these early churches had forged a novel path for religion after more than 7,000 years of human history. Yega sought to create a community where everyone, especially those in the laboring classes, could find happiness, a community that was not just enjoyable for the very few in the ruling classes. In this regard, Yega decided to practice the following things:

1) there should be no poor people in the community of love; 2) the consumption community of the Apostles should serve as the ideal; 3) the community of love is a better model than a family by blood ties; 4) as church functions as a new family and a new home, nuclear families will gather together to form a large family, large families will form a village, and towns will gather together to form a country; and finally 5) one of the key tasks of a large family is child nurturing and education.

Jeonju Saenuri Church, which was greatly impressed by these values and the goals of the community, began 17 years ago, and since then, Hongdae Dining Church has been established 5 years ago after meeting the spirit of Yega.

Their “love God and love neighbors” practice includes three distinctive activities: 1) meal-centered worship service, 2) establish economic community, and 3) whole congregation is parenting and participating in education for children and youth together.

First distinctive practice of them is to have meal-centered worship service. While Yega studied Christian documents from the 1st and 2nd centuries to examine the connection between the sacrament and the meal, they encountered Dennis E. Smith’s book, *From Symposium to Eucharist* and Hal Taussig’s book, *In the Beginning was the Meal*. Yega was deeply moved by their books and learned that the 1st and 2nd century Jesus movement gathered together beyond class, gender, and Roman Empire’s oppression, and they layed on the couch with food and enjoyed this time with leisure and entertainment.

Through Smith and Taussig, Yega realized that feeding each other with good things is the best foundation for a happy community life and is the best way to not have poor and hungry people in their community. In their table, those who are serving others are in the best position to

host people with a good heart and good food. Therefore, serving position is the honorable.

Focusing on these values, the three churches have meal-centered worship service. In particular, the Hongdae Dining Church, as its name, shares meals whenever they gather, and strives to love each other so that no one is poor or hungry in their community.

The three churches call the meal-centered service as “Agape.” Interestingly, Agape is translated only as ‘love’ in the New Testament. However, in ancient Greek epic poems such as Homer’s Iliad and Plato’s books, it is used as a language to express feelings about ‘good meals.’ In other words, when expressing satisfaction or appreciating a meal, the expression ‘Agape’ is used. Agape’s verb form in Hebrew “Agapao (ἀγαπάω)” means to serve a good meal and to welcome with good food. Hebrew word, אָהַבָה (ahavah), that Hosea used to love Gomer can also be read in the same context, that is hoping that Israel will return to God and enjoy the kingdom of God with love that feeds each other. In addition, Agape was used in connection with feeding brothers and sisters well with good food at the place of meal remembering Jesus in the 1st and 2nd centuries, and at the place of δεῖπνον (Deipnon) and συμπίνω (Symposium), the first church meals.

Unfortunately, as Christianity became the official religion in the 4th century, Agape has degenerated into an abstract, emotional, and personal concept of ‘love.’ However, during the 1st and 2nd centuries, Agape was a place of life where Jesus’s followers experienced the presence of the Kingdom of God through a meal-centered gathering. In this manner, Agape is not just about ‘love,’ or ‘a space to simply eat some food.’ Yet, Agape is a microcosm of the Kingdom of God, where the members of the three churches experience the Kingdom of God in its present context and is the place where they share love with good food and good heart.

The most distinctive thing in Agape is that each member shares narratives of what they were grateful for, who they were grateful for, and what they practiced love for a week. Even after sharing the passage given that week, they share narratives about what the passage means to each individual and how they will live for the next week according to their own reflection. Finally, they create, record, and share communal narratives based on the narratives each individual shares and finish Agape. The communal narrative that they made together gives the members the power to live a new week with a new heart. In a word, through narratives, each individual has the opportunity to look back on their own lives, listen to each other's' stories, reflect on their lives, and think about a better self and community. This is a very meaningful time because it is the process that can establish self and communal identity and to empower one another.

The second distinctive practice is to establish economic communities. The three churches first studied and understood the governance structure of this world and its system. It is clear to them that 99% of people have to trample and to work on someone for the 1% ruling class in a pyramid-like social structure. The bigger problem is that even within the church, which is supposed to be a Kingdom of God, people with a high social status, people with a high status in the church, and people with a lot of money rule over others, no different from what has been happening in the world.

As a result, they ponder how to live a life of love based on the values of God's Kingdom within oppressive social structure and system. From Acts chapters 2 and 4, which describes the Jesus community of the 1st and 2nd centuries, they learned about the value of economic community. Based on the Bible's teaching, they sought new economic practices that could be carried out within the current social and economic structure. Like the member of the first church

of Acts, they decided to collect, share, and consume the money regardless of how much they earned, with the members of the community.

In the beginning, they offered tithes, but then they decided to offer two-tenths, one for the church and one for the members. This practice comes from the belief that the money is from God. The world is not fair and no matter how hard we work, we sometimes do not get a 100% reward for our efforts. On contrast, sometimes we can get a good job or can earn a lot of money without trying very hard. Or meet parents who are in a high position in the world, so can live in a comfortable environment without worry for living. Therefore, it is not that we do not try to live hard in the world, but rather we do not too much care about how much money we can earn from it. Rather, the three churches give thanks to the things that they already have, focus that energy on their church community, and strategize how to spend the money wisely. Through this economic practice, they could be able to enjoy more abundant food, to share better food, and finally they established a 'love God and love neighbor' community that there are no poor people at least in their community. It is because they sincerely take care of emotionally, economically, spiritually, and physically marginalized people within their community.

Finally, the third distinctive practice is that whole congregation is parenting and participating in education for their community's children and youth together. Not only parents of blood relationships become parents of children, but all church members become parents of children in the church. If there is a field that each church member is good at, they become teachers in that field and educate children. By raising children together, the whole church helps each other in areas that are difficult for dual-income couples or nuclear families to handle.

Briefly, the three churches are re-awakening the importance of “togetherness” and becoming better examples of God's kingdom in a broken and individualized society due to dichotomy through Agape (meal-centered worship), economic consumption practice, and communal parenting. As a result, they are living a new life with values derived from the Kingdom of God, which deconstructs the world’s ideology that conveys all “~ism” ideologies and enables them to understand the value of “togetherness” and the joy of “love.”

B. Research Purpose

The aim of this dissertation begins with the attention to the marginalized people in society who are struggling with religious and cultural ideology (patriarchal and hierarchical). The focus is on the structures and ideologies that oppress the marginalized people, how they internalize those ideologies, what effect the internalized ideologies have on their lives and relationships, and how they transform them and their communities.

In this regard, churches should have a good influence on society beyond their local community to affect change and build a kingdom of God in their context against all the ‘~ism’ of society, such as sexism, classism, capitalism, racism, and white-centralism (white supremacy). This is because it is the calling and vocation of Christians. I wonder, however, how responsible today’s churches are when they respond to the calling and act in a way that represents the kingdom of God. Therefore, as a good example, I would like to explore three Korean churches that practice the values of God’s Kingdom as life beyond the ideology of the world.

C. Research Participants

Three churches will be discussed in this chapter, all of which share the same values and vision of their communities. Yega Church began 25 years ago, and Jeonju Saenuri Church was

founded 17 years ago, modeling its identity and values on Yega's. The Hongdae Dining Church was also founded 5 years ago through a meeting with Yega. While the regions of each church are different, they are moving together as brother churches with the same values and community goals. The majority of the leaders of Yega Church are in their 50s or older, but there are children, youth, and young people (or young adults?) as well. Jeonju Saenuri Church has a distribution of ages from 30s to 50s. Hongdae Dining Church is mainly composed of young people in their 20s to 40s.

Even though they share the same values and goals, the three churches have different cultures, depending on the age group and characteristics of their churches. I attempted to interview representatives of a variety of genders, ages, and statuses in order to take into account this diversity and secure sufficient research data. For this purpose, I conducted interviews with three people from each church. Therefore, a total of nine people participated in the interview process. Following is the basic information of the participants selected through this process:

Table 1. Interview Participants' Information

	Age	Gender	Position	Job
Participant A	20s	Female	Lay person	Student
Participant B	20s	Male	Pastor	Employee
Participant C	30s	Male	Lay person	Seminarian
Participant D	30s	Female	Lay person	Employee
Participant E	40s	Female	Lay person	Employer
Participant F	40s	Male	Pastor	Pastor
Participant G	50s	Female	Lay person	Employer
Participant H	60s	Male	Pastor	Pastor
Participant I	70s	Female	Lay person	-

D. Research Procedure

Interviews were conducted with each participant. Participants were asked to provide consent forms before the interview was conducted. During the interview, I explained the purpose of the study and its contents in a friendly and comfortable environment. To protect their human rights, the names of participants were also kept anonymous. In order to collect more information about the churches, I examined and collected materials such as weekly journals, sermons, church newsletters, a daily prayer statement of gratitude, a faithful confession, and materials for bible study. After gathering some information about them, the interview was conducted. In interviews, open-ended questions were used to elicit a wealth of information and personal experiences regarding religious and cultural oppressions as well as how the church community helps them to overcome these ideologies. Basically, the interview questions were based on the major programs of the three churches. It consists of three questions, which are centered around the following topics: 1) how do they understand the term "God's children" and what does it mean to them; 2) any significant programs or curriculum within their faith community that have had an impact on them; and 3) if they have experienced any life-changing experiences within their faith community. The following are the detailed interview questions:

- 1) Do you have a particular reason or background for choosing your current church?
- 2) What is unique about your church or program?
- 3) What do you believe is the main reason or purpose for the church programs?
- 4) What is the most meaningful program for you at the church and why?
- 5) What is your role in the program and what are your thoughts on it?
- 6) What are your thoughts on the relationship between church pastors and laypeople?
- 7) How do the children and the adults in the church relate to each other?
- 8) Are there any special programs or activities to overcome patriarchal or hierarchical behavior?
- 9) Are there any clear distinctions between the roles of women and men in the church or different responsibilities for each gender?

- 10) Who is primarily responsible for preparing the dining tables for the koinonia (communion)?
- 11) What do you believe to be the most important aspect of living the Christian life?
- 12) How do you understand the phrase “God’s child”, and what does it mean to you?
- 13) What are the meanings of “love” to you and “loving life?”?
- 14) What has changed for you before and after you understood the concept of being God's child and loving life?
- 15) What is the most challenging and rewarding aspect of living a life you love in both an individual and community context as a child of God?
- 16) I know that there is a time when small groups gather to share the experiences of those who have been practicing "loving life" during the previous week. I am curious as to how the shared stories of your community affect you.
- 17) How does the process of creating a faithful story together proceed and what does it entail for you?

In order to conduct effective interviews, I attempted to keep a listening attitude towards the study participants. The interview was conducted based on questions that had been prepared in advance. Additionally, I attempted to understand the intentions and core of the interview participants by asking additional impromptu questions or changing the order of the questions.

E. Research Results and Interpretation from Postcolonial Feminist and Narrative Perspectives

In the process of interviewing, I was interested in learning what participants’ experiences of religious and cultural oppression are, how they internalize those ideologies and how they affect them either consciously or unconsciously, and how their faith communities have allowed them to transform such oppression and internalized ideologies. Thus, through the first question, “how they chose the current faith community,” I was able to gain a deeper understanding of an individual’s background, how they were affected by their environment, and how the faith community helps them transform their thoughts. Furthermore, I gained a better understanding of community functions and the power of education through the question, “what programs or

curriculum have helped to transform your life,” if the purpose of the community is to “love God and love neighbors,” which profoundly connected the theory with the participants’ daily lives.

Upon analysis of the contents of the interview, two categories, four topic groups, and six topics with sub-detailed results were identified. These are summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Analysis of the Contents of the Interview

2 Categories	4 Topic Groups	6 Topics	Results
Before Meeting with the Current Church Community	Religious and Cultural Oppression	What kinds of religious and cultural oppression has been affected in the participant’s daily life	- A psychological burden caused by the pressure of love, service, sacrifice, and voluntary work. - A strong sense of hierarchy - Victim mentality as women - Lived like a slave - Dislike people - Anxiety for the future - A sense of unhappiness of their lives - The best values are money and power in society.
	Influences	How the participants have lived within those ideologies in both internal and external ways.	- Cranky and sensitive - Distrust in people - Maladaptation - Lethargy about life - A vague feeling of anxiety
After Meeting with the Current	Education and Programs	What kinds of programs or curriculum does the church community	- Prayer for others with action and actual practice to visit someone or to cook for someone, etc.

Church Community		provide for its members.	- Bible study as deconstructing secular ideology - Meal-centered service that provides satisfaction, joy, happiness, and a sense of togetherness - Making their own story (the process of sharing narrative) gives an individual and communal reflection - Hope for a new life through economic community - Realize God's Kingdom in their lives through education for their children
	Influences	How the programs affect the participants in internal and external ways.	- Having a strong identity as God's child - Live a life with self-agency - Love their lives and love others

In summarizing various interview questions and responses of the interviewees, they can be divided into two main categories: 1) their lives before meeting their community, and 2) their lives after meeting their community. In other words, it also can be said: 1) a life before having a strong identity as “child of God,” and 2) a life after having a strong identity as “child of God.” It may seem like a simple concept, but it is a powerful perception that can greatly impact one's direction of life because it deals with the transformation of one's ideology from the world to God's Kingdom.

1. A Life Before Having a Strong Identity as “Child of God”

First of all, the first category contains information about religious and cultural oppression, how it has affected the individual's daily life, and the way people within those

ideologies have lived. In the first category, interview participants stated that they felt psychological pressure, anxiety, victim mentality, slave mentality, and unhappiness. Following are some statements about psychological pressure.

Psychological Pressure

[Participant C]

In my previous church, I was tired of strong hierarchical relationships between pastors and laypeople. I had experienced pressure in church services. I was not happy even when I attended the church.

[Participant A]

As I began visiting churches in order to find a place where I can study the bible, the churches wherever I went, they suggested me to serve as a children's teacher. It was because I majored in early childhood education. Prior to volunteering, I wanted to learn the bible. So, these suggestions were burdensome to me.

[Participant H]

My parents and grandmother, who were believers, brainwashed me to accept and obey the pastor's words in church as if they were God's words. Even though I did not understand the pastor's behavior, I could not ask questions about it since I grew up hearing my parents and grandmother.

Participant C, A, and H stated psychological pressure. This pressure originates from strong hierarchical ideology. Due to the power imbalance between the high and the low, that is, the power grabber and the powerless, the interview participants C, A, and H were unable to easily object to the story of their superiors. These statements reflect the prevailing cultural atmosphere of obedience and the culture of conservative Christianity in Korea. In other words, it can be said that they felt psychological pressure in a cultural and religious environment where it was difficult for them to freely express their thoughts and feelings.

In addition, some interview participants expressed anxiety over pressure and competition to go to a good college or to obtain a good job in accordance with social standards.

Anxiety

[Participant E]

I was wasting my time to find a better job that met the expectations of my family and society's standards. Either I did not do my best with everything that I could, nor I did not try to do my best. I was concerned that at this rate I would grow old as a surplus and eventually commit suicide later.

[Participant G]

I have dedicated myself to my knowledge and experience to be better than the others in a competitive society for decades. As a result, I felt anxious about the future and wondered what I truly wanted. It was because I am already getting too old to do something that I am really passionate about according to society's perspective.

In their interviews, they indicated that living according to social standards resulted in them losing what they really wanted and liked. In this situation, they felt anxious about the possibility of committing suicide in the future and frustrated about their age.

The following is a reference to the sense of victim mentality as a woman.

Victim Mentality

[Participant D]

I was very sensitive to the imbalance of power between men and women and the division of roles among them. In my life, there was a great deal of backlash against the structure of gender inequality, and in many situations, I faced, I perceived myself negatively as a "woman".

Participant D's response indicates that sexist culture and society not only reveal external structural discrimination, but also have a profound impact on a person's perception by internalizing the ideology. In other words, the ideology of sexism influences one's perception, causing one to perceive oneself negatively.

Following are the answers from interview participants to the question of how they lived in the world.

Slave Mentality

[Participant G]

Competition is what I learned in school or society. I have been taught how to get into a good university and a large company. It appears that I had to struggle to achieve a high social position, competed fiercely with others to enter a good job, and lived as a slave to the ideology.

[Participant H]

Almost every day I was distracted by smoking, drinking, and playing in clubs. In the past, I was a person who spent a lot of my parents' money in order to gain the attention of my friends, without considering my parents or family. It was a life of slavery to money and fame.

Unhappiness and Lethargy

[Participant B]

In the previous church, which emphasized unconditional faith and forced sacrifices under the guise of love and service, I was not happy. I found some spiritual teachings particularly difficult to accept.

[Participant I]

My life was characterized by lethargy, and I lived a life without any vitality that does not have any strong desire to work hard for money or to learn something new. The pressure to achieve grades according to school standards and attend a good school caused me to avoid reality when I was in school, and I was not happy. Whenever I did not meet the society's standards, I felt like I have become a loser or abnormal person.

I found that the participants' lives had become helpless, unhappy, and enslaved due to living in a world of competition without being able to find a way out of this framework. The group stated that they were not in this state from the beginning, but that repeated competition in life, in which money and power were deemed to be the most important factors, did not reflect a Christian spirit. Additionally, competition and power-based structures within the Christian community, which are no different from those in the world, had not influenced their lives positively. Therefore, they lived like slaves, meaningless, and miserable without alternative means.

In putting together the overall interview responses to the questions such as “do you have a particular reason or background for choosing your current church? or are there any clear distinctions between the roles of women and men in the church or different responsibilities for each gender?”, it is apparent that the interviewees have lived under the influence of hierarchical and male-central ideologies both in their personal lives and within the church community. Moreover, they felt frustrated, anxious, and helpless within a capitalist society characterized by wealth and power. It was found that society’s structural and epistemological violence and inequality rooted in money and power were suppressing their values, and that the repression was internalized and led to a negative evaluation of their values or underestimate themselves.

Now they confess that following their meeting with the current community they have experienced a miracle that has transformed their lives, which were unhappy, useless, and anxious. The next section examines the programs and values of their current churches that have positively influenced their lives.

2. A Life After Having a Strong Identity as “Child of God”

The second category includes what kind of methods and programs is conducted in the interview participants’ churches to liberate religious and cultural ideologies and how the values that the churches pursue have been affected the participant’s life and their community. In this regard, I will discuss the detailed educational programs that the three churches have been practiced based on the interview participants’ responses.

To respond to these questions: “What is unique about your church or program? What do you believe is the main reason or purpose for the church programs? What is your role in the program and what are your thoughts on it? Are there any special programs or activities to

overcome patriarchal or hierarchical behavior? What do you believe to be the most important aspect of living the Christian life? And what are the meanings of “love” to you and “loving life?”, many interview participants mentioned Bible study with Redefining Christian Terms, Prayers for Others with Practical Action, and Meal-centered Worship Service with Creating their own Statement as the most influential educational programs.

First, they gathered together for the bible study every week. The main focus of their study was the Gospel of Mark, the first book of the Gospels, focusing on redefining the Christian term such as Holy Spirit, salvation, resurrection, etc. People who used to live by faith had the time to study the bible and redefine religious terms. In addition, those who were not religious had the opportunity to learn about a new faith-based lifestyle. They not only study the Christian terms but also share narrative creating statement by reflecting on what they have learned and how the new definition is related to my life and thoughts. Through this process, their identity as a “child of God” was reestablished, and also their communal identity has established. Following are their responses.

[Participant D]

Through the bible study, I learned that God only exists in love. So, I understand God as love itself. In the Gospel, Jesus Christ proclaims that he is the son of God, who is love, and that every person who wants to live a loving life becomes a little Christ. For this reason, I identify myself as a child of God. As long as I seek to live a loving life according to God’s will, I am not a slave to the world, just a woman, a person who has failed in society, or a person who is afraid of failing in the world, but a ‘child of God’ who rules the world with love.

[Participant E]

With the help of Bible study, concerns about economic power, housing, marriage, childcare, and aging disappeared. I am able to do this because I learned how to live according to love, which is God's will. A life of loving the people next to me through actions like Jesus and living together is a life of living as the son of God, thus I believe

that God's son can be whoever chooses to live a life of love, not just a man chosen by God.

[Participant G]

By studying the Bible, I learned for the first time why I should believe in God, why I attend church, and realized that God's greatest wish is for us to love one another. Bible study was more valuable than any 16-year schooling I had ever received. It is my opinion that living a life of love is the most fulfilling way to live, and this is the life of God's child. As a result of Bible study, I realized how much I was devoted to world values, hating people, and living a life dedicated to money and power as a slave to the world. I am glad to be able to recognize again that I am a man of God through Bible study and to abandon the world's ideologies.

Through Bible study, they acquired new values, which are solid values that affirms they are "children of God." This shift in perception enabled them to live with a new perspective of the world. As a result, they no longer trample on others, compete, and live as slaves to money and power, but rather they give more value to a given life and think about how they can better love and care for others. In particular, the time of narrative allows them to recreate their identities with a new definition of Christian terms, which also impacts their way of living.

Another influential program is Prayers for Others with Practical Action. It is not uncommon for Christians to perceive prayer as a passive act of sitting in a chair and hoping for something to happen. Obviously, prayers can be conducted while driving or walking while thinking about yourself or others, however, the appearance is still passive. This is because they only desire that something be done in their place, but there is no practical action taken. However, the responses of the interview participants introduced next illustrate how they pray for others.

[Participant I]

Prayer for Others is a program that I believe is particularly noteworthy. It is not just a prayer to ask God to do something for me or for others. Instead, it is like a determined prayer that I will do something for others. I find this prayer very helpful as a reminder for me, who is lazy and greedy, to focus on loving the next person of me with action once again. I find it to be a very special program because I can think more deeply about the

needs of the person who I wish to pray for, I can prepare a meal for the person, and I can have the heart of love that goes beyond any words.

[Participant C]

Our church practices prayer through action. If the person next to you starves to death, but you do not give him or her the food rather enter the small room cries, "Save him from poverty," the prayer will be ineffective. However, I have found that treating hungry people through physical actions and communicating the story of love has the potential to save one person through the prayer of action. I feel alive whenever I invite someone to participate in my action prayer or whenever I am invited to participate in someone else's prayer

[Participant B]

Prayer seems to be the most important program. In my opinion, this is the most unique program. I consider sharing each other's life and sharing a meal of love with the person next to me through my action is the real prayer, rather than assuming unconditional faith or praying for blessings to come.

[Participant A]

In the past, I was unfairly fired from a part-time job. At that time, the church members listened to my story and looked for a job together until I was able to find another job and supported me with a living expense. By their actions, I learned what real love is, and I was surprised to learn that it was their prayer. I was able to learn for sure what it was like to pray for someone next to me through their prayers.

Based on their responses, we found that their prayer program is an action program. Meeting with church members, listening to their stories, sharing love meals with them, and taking care of their actual lives were true prayers and the embodiment of their beloved lives. For instance, when one member loses her/his job due to unavoidable circumstances, some other members assist her/him in finding a job until she/he is able to return to work. Further, if there is a legal issue, some members determine how to solve it legally and offer practical help. In order to help young people whose ability to adapt to society is limited and with a low quality of housing environment, Hongdae Dining Church provides Incubating Housing in which they can live together until they can adapt to society and help them settle down. These are some of examples of intermediate

prayers with practical actions offered by the three churches. This loving behavior causes them to feel proud of themselves as they are the children of God and as one family that follows God's love. This is the way that they practice the values of God's Kingdom, which is a different ideology from that of the world.

Finally, one of the influential programs that the interview participants mentioned is the Meal-centered worship service. Agape is the name of the meal-centered service. There is no high and low in Agape, unlike the world. Agape's place is a microcosm of God's kingdom in which all people are treated equally without classism or sexism, and there are no hungry people in their communities. The following are the participants' responses to Agape.

[Participant A]

We gather in Agape's place not only to eat food, but also to share our lives, to learn how we lived our beloved lives, and to learn how to love one another more. I find that this is the most comfortable time for me to discuss love. It is good to look back on me while listening to stories about the lives each person has lived, to learn how to live while loving, and to discover a little Christ within the person you sit beside. The words are a motto that we use in our lives to live anew with the hope of loving every new week.

[Participant B]

As a program, Agape seeks to eliminate classism, sexism, and hierarchy as well as patriarchy. Everyone participates in the meal equally, regardless of gender or position within the community, and everyone prepares meals together with a loving heart, rather than with money and power.

[Participant D]

It is very important to share about the life in Agape. Talking about each other's lives gives me the opportunity to gradually enhance my own life. Both the speaker and the listener share their lives and influence one another. In this process, I feel that I am one with the church members.

[Participant F]

A meal preparation team is formed regardless of gender to prepare meals together. In sharing meals, I think about the sincerity of the people who prepared the food and thank them. When I prepare a meal, I think hard about how to make it so that my family can

enjoy it. That is why we always share a generous meal in our community. When we share these meals, our worries about food are dispelled. It is possible to share a happy time with my church family, eating good things together, preparing a good table, and enjoying a rich meal.

[Participant G]

Agape is a communion, a full of feast, and the communion is the greatest life to us. It is the place where the kingdom of God is realized. People who wish to be first become the last to serve everyone in Agape. In other words, those who serve others are the first and most honorable members of Agape. there is no pyramid-type of class structure in Agape. The kingdom of God does not have a class-based society based on wealth and power. thus, everyone takes turns preparing meals. Awareness of love and good behavior for fulfilling love in action is the highest class in Agape. therefore, those who have this perception in their mind and who practice this in action becomes the first class in Agape.

Many participants in the interview reaffirmed that all people are equal children of God in Agape, a meal-oriented worship service. Taking off their worldly status and honor, they participated in Agape only as children of God. As Jesus knelt down to wash his disciples' feet and served them at the Lord's Supper, they were also lowered at Agape and served one another with prepared and delicious meals. The most important value they considered in Agape, in which everyone is equal and is sharing the words and actions of love. Through reflecting on the kind of love behavior they exhibited and sharing their stories, they looked back on their lives, learned from each other and grew up together. What distinguishes them is that they share the stories of their loved lives with one another and make new words to live anew the following week. Thus, the new words that they made together becomes their motto to live a week with a new heart as children of God.

The most important part of the meal-centered worship is the narrative time when they express their reflection and appreciation for each other. At least one story is always prepared before the meal service begins. Regardless of their social status and honor, they only share how they have practiced love in their lives and how much and why they appreciate each other. As a

result, their narratives become mirrors for one another, giving them strength to start a new week and their self-esteem as child of God is increasing.

F. Conclusion

As of now, we have examined three churches that regard "love with action" as their top value and live by this principle. I was able to learn from the conversations with interview participants from the three churches what changes had occurred in their lives before and after they acquired a firm sense of identity as children of God.

A few participants confessed that even though they were Christians, they did not have a firm belief that they were children of God prior to meeting the present community. In other words, they believed in God and attended church, however they lived in accordance with the world's ideologies, which value classism, sexism, ageism, patriarchy, hierarchy, and capitalism. At the same time, non-Christian participants expressed disappointment of overwhelming classism and sexism within religion as well as the dramatically different behavior of religious people in their words and actions. In short, it was their reality that they lived according to the values and standards of the governance system, leading to a life of self-centeredness, competitiveness, defeatism, misery, helplessness, and obedience to injustice. In such a situation, it was impossible for them to love themselves, let alone care for the person next to them, and rather they denied themselves.

However, they realized the true will of true Christians through love demonstrated in action within a new community. They learned that this is the way a child of God should be living and the way to be happy. Their Bible study went beyond conventional and traditional religious concepts and consisted of deconstructing worldly ideology education that applied to their real-

life experiences. Through this education, they were able to recognize what their internalized ideologies were and to recognize how they had suppressed them. In other words, they realized that the ideology which they internalized and suppressed was a life dominated by money and power. A significant change has occurred in their perception of following the values of the world as a result of postcolonial education. they began to understand the structure and system of society and realized that its values are different from those of God's kingdom based on love.

After gaining a perspective on deconstructing of ideology through Bible study, they did not remain seated. In order to change their lives, each person applied that philosophy one by one in their lives. Their values have changed from values of the world to values of God's Kingdom that are based on love in actions. They have not only acquired it in their heads, but have tried to embody the values of God's kingdom through their bodies in order to truly transform their lives. Their efforts can be seen in their prayers for others with action. Prayer for others is not only passive prayer sitting in a chair; it is prayer and life that moves the body directly to think about what others need and provide practical assistance. By praying practically, they are able to live out their beloved lives and achieve a high sense of self-esteem as children of God. This level of self-esteem provides a new dimension to a life that cannot be acquired through the values of the world.

Agape, a meal-centered worship service, maximizes the sense of identity as God's children as well as an individual's sense of self-esteem. In Agape, everyone takes off their status or honor in the world and focuses on loving. Agape is the kingdom of God, freed from gender discrimination, class discrimination, male-centered ideology, and racism, so that everyone sits around one table equally to share meals and stories about how they are practicing love in their

daily lives. In Agape, people who have money and power are not the best. Instead, people who move their bodies to serve and love the people around them are the best. It is not just a place for them to eat, but a place to reflect on their lives for a week and obtain the encouragement and empowerment to live another week anew. It is a living worship service. In narratives, the bible passage and their sharing of life are told and heard. Bible words and their sharing of life are told and heard in narratives. Afterwards, they make common words so that the narratives shared in this manner do not disappear after being heard on the spot. The common words they create together give them the strength to start a new week, and they continue to live a loving life through this. This is how they transform their lives and embody the value of God's Kingdom, Love, in their individual and communal lives.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In our modern era, we live in the 5th Industrial Revolution, driven by artificial intelligence beyond the 4th Industrial Revolution. In the world changes rapidly, many aspects of daily life, including transportation, travel, and the Internet, developed conveniently. In recent years, the term “Glocal (global + local)” has appeared showing that local municipalities, countries, and international organizations are more closely linked.

However, in spite of the remarkable development of civilization and the diversification of race, culture, and religion, there remains a group who suffer from polarized ideology rather than harmony. Such as racism, sexism, male-centralism, classism, imperialism, and capitalism substantially distinguish between people who have power and authority and those who are not. This is like the pyramid structure that illustrates how 1% of the upper class exert authority over 99% of the lower class people based on ethnicity, culture, gender, age, status, wealth, and honor. In other words, the people who have great power in society categorize the people without power as the “other” and push them to the boundary.

In the case of George Floyd, a black man who passed away in 2020 because of excessive force by Derek Chauvin, we see a tragic and fragmented example of white supremacy and racism. The following is what Kristen Delegard, a historian at the University of Minnesota and Mapping Prejudice project manager, says about the “boundary” created by the narrowing of black people's living spaces and the forcing of them into small neighborhoods, “whose space is

this? Who gets to be here? Who doesn't get to be here? And who's going to enforce that?"¹ The question that Deligald has raised really asks us a fundamental question. Who established the boundary between you and me and whose space is that boundary? Who is forced to stay at the boundary and who protects the boundary? We are reminded by her words that all forms of racism, sexism, and classism that we face in our daily lives already exist and are being implemented both institutionally and operationally.

In addition, the rapid increase in the number of young people struggling alone in such a polarized structure and extremely competitive society results in ending their lives alone is emerging as a serious social problem. Statistically, the rate of end-of-life alone deaths is high among the elderly, however, due to COVID-19 and difficult employment conditions, the rate of lonely end-of-life deaths among 20 and 30-year-olds has rapidly increased 40.9% and 41.2%, respectively, compared to the previous year in 2019.² More than 150 resumes and traces of job searches, empty refrigerators, instant food containers, and delivery containers of food are found in the rooms of young people who ended their lives alone. The site does not reflect any signs of social life or communication with other people, only the traces of a "Go-dok-saeng, lonely life," a lonely existence in which one must eat in an isolated place for survival.

These examples provide a glimpse into the reality of our present day and raise the question of what made their lives so lonely. Indeed, do these cases apply only to them? I do not agree with it. It is important to recognize that this is a story for all of us living within the same

¹ Olivia B. Waxman, "George Floyd's Death and the Long History of Racism in Minneapolis," *Time*, May 28, 2020, <https://time.com/5844030/george-floyd-minneapolis-history/>.

² Hakjoon Lee and Bokkyu Song, "생활고 속 고독사하는 청년 늘어" [Increasing Number of Young People Passing Away Alone as a Result of Hardship], *ChosunBiz*, July 22, 2021, https://biz.chosun.com/topics/topics_social/2021/07/22/Q6JHIF75TJH57I7UXLKY53UK4Q/.

ideological framework and times, not their own. All “~isms” lead to inequality and hatred, the issue of capital imbalance, extreme bipolarity, and the two examples examined remind us of the importance of community and the importance of living with those around us. Over thousands of years, oppressed by the ideology of the ruling system, subordinated to it, and solidarity with those who have been on the boundary as “others” should be the direction of Christians’ lives.

Then, how can we relate to others who are treated as “others” and pushed back to the boundaries? First, it is necessary to liberate theology that is epistemologically and structurally dominated by imperialism and patriarchy. As we have examined from three Korean churches’ bible study program and how it affects the interview participant’s daily lives, we should be able to recognize legalized imperialist ideologies and dichotomy thinking that still affect Christians and their mindsets today, such as rulers/subordinate, employer/laborer, men/women, rich/poor, and white/colored people. We must also resist exploitation of imperialism, and in today’s multicultural and postcolonial world. We should critically think that “Who defined the boundaries and whose spaces are the boundaries? Who is forced to stay at the boundaries and who is guarding the boundaries?” So that we should seek new ways to liberate ourselves from internalized imperialism and “~ism” ideology.³

Second, we should remember that the understanding of education that teaches and learns the spirit of Christ and direction is very important. In today’s era of individual-centeredness, othering, discrimination, and exclusion, HyeRan Kim-Cragg insists that “Interdependence”⁴ is a

³ Musa Dube, “Toward a Post-Colonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible,” in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women’s Theology*, ed., Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013), 98.

⁴ HyeRan Kim-Cragg, *Interdependence: A Postcolonial Feminist Practical Theology* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 19.

very important concept and must be practiced in our lives. Her interdependence means that for a person to be a whole self, there must be the other, and we are formed by relying on the other. In other words, I exist because of the person next to me, and I can be a whole being through the person next to me. Furthermore, the practice of interdependence goes beyond simply recognizing others and asks for awareness of the existence of structural and institutional real power, class, inequality, and injustice around us. In addition, Kim-Cragg points out that the death of familiarity in the search for interdependent ways of life leads to life, and life too narrowly defined as normal can lead to death.⁵ In other words, it requests de-colonialism of the ideologies that we naturally internalized.

The three Korean churches practice deconstruction of formalized Christian ideology and worldly ideology through the bible study and meal-centered worship, Agape, as they share their lives in narrative and make new words for transforming their daily lives. This is an important process in which they interdepend on each other and a process for de-ideology from the formalized worldly values that suppress them. In addition, this is a practice for living together with one another, a way for building the Kingdom of God with in them. Through their examples, we learn how narrative is effective for people to reflect the bible passage and individual life and to transform their lives into a new being.

Third, we should be ready to embrace people who are considered as different from us. Most of all, the United States can be said to be the world's most multi-cultural and multi-religious nation, and this can be attributed to the high immigration rate. In such a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, it is crucial and inevitable to renew our awareness of the value of

⁵ Kim-Cragg, *Interdependence*, 55.

“living together with others.” As a religious educator, Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, mentions, the first step to truly living with others is to acknowledge the differences and to build relationships on the basis of that acknowledgment.⁶ It presents a number of suggestions that are challenge to modern ideologies that do not regard uniqueness between others as “differences,” but as hate, discrimination, and “othering.”

Finally, today’s church should be a community of Christ, a community of hospitality, beyond all boundaries of exclusion and disgust. Letty M. Russell asks for building a community not from uniformity but from differences through hospitality.⁷ For Russell, the church is a community of Christ that has been bought at a price, where everyone is welcomed,⁸ and Jesus’ struggle to overcome the structures of sin and death is the new source of life for the community.⁹ Christine D. Pohl’s argument that hospitality is not an option for Christians, nor is it limited to those who have special abilities. Instead, hospitality is an essential practice in the community of faith calls for the importance of true Christian identity and hospitality to the discrimination and exclusionary churches that have permeated into their preaching, education, and structure today.¹⁰ In other words, hospitality means willingly to participate in Jesus Christ’s life that he welcomes and meets with strangers and people around him at the boundary, communicates with them, and reinvents the boundary into a space of transformation.

⁶ Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, *God Beyond Borders: Interreligious Learning Among Faith Communities* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), xxxiii.

⁷ Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 48.

⁸ Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round*, 14, quoted in Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 113.

⁹ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 44.

¹⁰ Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 31, quoted in Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 24.

As we must confess through Jesus' life that we have ruled out numerous marginalized and non-mainstream people, such as children, women, sexual minorities, and the disabled, based on imperial, colonial, and male-centered values. Also, by recognizing Christian tradition and structure that perpetuates and reproduces oppression and subordination, we should be able to hear those moaning "I can't breathe" in discriminatory structures. Such a church is the true "community of Christ." Christ met numerous "the Other" people on the border, who were dehumanized by tradition and ideology and excluded in discrimination and disgust, and treated them as personal beings. In other words, Jesus gave the marginalized and subordinated people a new life through hospitality in an in-between space. And there was always a dialogue with others.

Do today's Christians and churches live "in, but not of, the world" which is based on Paul's request (1 Corinthians 7:29-31)? Or live "of, but not in, the world" as be silent on the structure of injustice and inequality but reproducing them religiously and traditionally? The greatest commandment given to us, namely "Love God and Love your neighbor" (Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28), is finally completed through "relationship with others." Christ's life of love toward the other saved many people from oppression and subordination, that is, saved from the life of slavery, and fulfilled God's will through communication with them. We, who want to follow the life of Christ, should also respond to the call of Christ. He invites us to the boundary, and here and now, we should build the Kingdom of God with others.

APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

Consent Form (English)

1. Identification of Investigators and Purpose of Study

You are invited to participate in a research study, entitled “Transformative Religious Education through Postcolonial and Narrative Pedagogical Approaches: with Egalitarian Korean Churches as the Focus.” The study is conducted by Miseon Choi under the supervision of Dr. Frank Jr. Rogers of the Claremont School of Theology, 1325 N. College Ave. Claremont, CA 91711), *email address and phone number*.

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of internalized religious and cultural ideologies on Christians and their lives, to explore the concept of ‘love,’ which is a completed commandment that can bring true transformation to their lives, and to realize it in individual lives. Your participation in the study will contribute to a better understanding of not only Korean Christians but also those who have lost their voices and become marginalized from the religious and cultural suppression of the society. They will be able to experience liberation and realize the true God’s love in their lives. You are free to contact the investigator using the information below to discuss the study.

Address; phone number; email address

2. Research Progress

You must be at least 18 years old to participate. For this study, the investigator will be conducting an individual interview. If you agree to participate in the study, you will participate in the interview of approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours. If you don't want to participate in this study or if there are any inconveniences, please let me know. The researcher will immediately stop all research-related work. The study will involve a total of nine people, including you, who must be at least 18 years of legal age.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into practical theology, pastoral care and/or spiritual care. Participation in this study should not be regarded as – or substituted for – therapy by a licensed professional.

3. Risks and Confidentiality of Data

There are no known risks. There will be no costs for participating. Your name, email address and other personally identifiable information will be kept during the data collection phase. After joining the interview, all information from participants will be fully secured under an anonymous name (including e-mail). Without prior consent of participants, the content of the interview and information of participants are not disclosed in any form. Participation in the interview will be recorded in voice and word files only for research purposes and will not be saved in any other form. No personally identifiable information will be publicly released. Your personal information, if collected, will be used solely for tracking purposes. However, for research purposes, the interview contents are available to the researcher, professor, and assistant only. Interviews are recorded in word files, and participants' names will be treated as aliases.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. If photographs, videos, or audio-tape recordings of your participation are used for educational purposes, your identity will be protected or disguised. Your information will be stored until this project is ended. When the study is complete, and your information will be destroyed.

4. Participation or Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal will not affect your relationship with Claremont School of Theology in any way. If you do not want to participate, you may simply stop participating.

5. Contacts

If you have any questions about the study or need to update your email address contact the primary investigator Miseon Choi at _____ or send an email to _____, or contact the advisor Frank Rogers at _____ or email to _____. This study has been reviewed by Claremont School of Theology Institutional Review Board and the study number is 2020-0302.

6. Questions about your rights as a research participant.

If you have questions about your rights or are dissatisfied at any time with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the chair of the Institutional Review Board by email at irb@cst.edu.

Thank you.

Signature of Research Participant

I have read the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

Address

Phone

Email

Signature of Investigator

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX II: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (KOREAN)

연구 참여 동의서 Consent Form (Korean)

1. 연구자 정보와 연구방향 및 목적

귀하는 “Transformative Religious Education through Postcolonial and Narrative Pedagogical Approaches: with Egalitarian Korean Churches as the Focus” 라는 제목으로 진행되는 최미선의 연구 논문에 참여합니다. 이 연구는 미국 캘리포니아주에 있는 클레어몬트 신학대학원 (Claremont School of Theology, 1325 N. College Ave., Claremont, CA 91711) 의 Frank Rogers 교수의 지도 아래 수행됩니다. 논문과 관련하여 지도 교수와 연락하기를 원하신다면, Dr. Frank Rogers (_____) or _____)로 연락 하시기 바랍니다.

본 논문의 목적은 내면화된 종교적, 문화적 이데올로기가 한국 기독교인들과 그들의 삶에 미치는 영향은 무엇인지 살펴보고, 그들의 삶에 진정한 변화를 가져올 수 있는 완성된 계명인 ‘사랑’의 개념에 대해 모색하고 개개인의 삶에 실현하는데 있습니다. 귀하의 참여는 한국 기독교인 뿐만 아니라, 이 사회의 종교적, 문화적으로 타자를 억압하는 구조 속에서 소외되고 목소리를 잃은 자아들에 대한 더 나은 이해에 기여할 것입니다. 그리고 본 연구를 통하여 그들이 해방을 경험하고, 예수의 참 사랑을 그들의 삶에 실현할 수 있을 것입니다. 본 논문에 대해 자세한 내용이나 궁금한 점이 있으시면 아래의 연구자의 연락처로 문의해 주시기 바랍니다.

address / phone number / email address

2. 연구 진행

본 연구를 위해 연구자는 개별 인터뷰를 진행할 것입니다. 만약 연구에 참여하기를 동의하신다면, 귀하는 약 1 시간 반 – 2 시간 정도의 인터뷰에 참여하시게 됩니다. 만일, 본 연구에 참가를 원하지 않거나 혹은 불편한 점이 생기면 알려주십시오. 연구자는 그 즉시 연구와 관련된 모든 일을 중단할 것입니다. 연구는 이 글을 읽는 본인을 포함하여 총 9 명이 참여할 것이며, 연구 참여자는 반드시 법적 나이 18 세 이상이어야 합니다.

3. 위험/정보 보안에 대한 방침

본 연구와 관련하여 알려진 위험은 없으며, 참가 비용도 없습니다. 인터뷰에 참여를 하신 후에 참여자의 모든 정보는 무기명으로 철저히 보안처리 됩니다 (이메일 포함). 참여자의 사전 동의 없이는 어떤 형식으로도 인터뷰의 내용과 참여자의 정보는 공개되지 않습니다. 인터뷰에 참여한 내용은 연구 목적을 위해서만 음성파일과 워드파일로 기록될 예정이며 어떠한 다른 형태로도 저장되지 않을 것입니다. 다만 연구를 위해 연구자, 담당교수, 조교에 한 해 인터뷰 내용이 제한적으로 가용됩니다. 인터뷰 내용은 워드파일로 기록되어 연구 목적만으로 사용되며, 참여자의

이름은 가명으로 처리될 것입니다. 참여자의 정보는 어떤 형태로도 기록, 유포되지 않음을 다시 한번 알려드립니다.

4. 참여 혹은 철회

귀하의 연구 참여는 자발적인 것입니다. 귀하는 어떤 질문에도 답변을 거절할 수 있으며 또한 어느 때든지 연구 참여를 철회할 수 있는 권리를 갖고 있습니다. 연구자에게 참여 철회의 의사를 알릴 경우 연구를 위해 기록한 모든 자료와 인적사항 및 모든 기록을 삭제합니다. 연구 참여 철회는 귀하가 가지고 있는 클레어몬트 신학대학원과의 관계에 아무런 영향을 미치지 않습니다. 만약 연구 참여를 원하지 않는다면 단순히 참여를 철회하시기 바랍니다.

5. 연락처

만약 귀하가 연구와 관련된 질문이 있거나 귀하의 이메일을 업데이트 할 필요가 있다면 연구자 최미선의 전화번호 _____ 혹은 _____ 로 연락 바랍니다. 이 연구는 클레어몬트 신학대학원 기관 윤리 심사위원회(Institutional Review Board)의 검토를 받아왔으며 이 연구의 번호는 2020-0302 입니다.

6. 연구 참여자로서의 귀하의 권리에 대한 질문

만약 귀하의 권리에 대한 질문이 있거나 이 연구에 대하여 불만족스러운 점이 있다면 기관 윤리 심사위원회의 연락처인 irb@cst.edu 로 연락할 수 있습니다. 원할 경우, 익명으로 연락할 수 있습니다. 감사합니다.

<연구 참여자의 서명>

나는 위에 설명된 정보를 읽었습니다. 질문을 할 수 있는 기회가 있었고 나의 모든 질문에 대한 만족스러운 답변을 얻었습니다. 이 양식에 대한 사본을 받았습니다.

연구 참여자의 이름

연구 참여자의 서명

날짜

주소

전화번호

이메일

<연구자의 서명>

연구자의 서명

날짜

APPENDIX III: EXAMPLES OF THE MEAL-CENTERED WORSHIP ORDER (AGAPE)

Following the format designed by Christian churches in the early 1st and 2nd centuries, Agape consists of two parts: first sharing a meal and then libation. Here is an example of Agape from Yega and Jeonju Saenuri churches:

The 1 st Part: Meal	1) Gratitude and Blessing on the Food 2) Lord's Prayer 3) Ethic of the Table (It is a time for reflecting on how to participate in the meal – renew attitude and mindset) 4) Dining and Conversation about what they have been grateful for during the past week 5) Prayer after Dining 6) Praise Song (It is not limited to Christian Contemporary music.)
Break	A Short Clean up Time (All together)
The 2 nd Part: Libation	A. Opening 1) Ethic of Libation (Renew attitude and mindset as they participate in the libation which is an opportunity to embody the values of Jesus' way of life.) 2) Entrance of Gods (Everyone takes off their societal status and participates equally as children of God.) 3) An Opening Speech 4) Libation for Jesus Christ (Not for worldly ideologies) 5) Song of the Sons and Daughters of God (Philippians 2:6-11) B. Conversation 1) Proclamation of Subject (Assigned passage for the Agape day) 2) Reading the Scripture

	3) Lesson (Shared by the Agape leader) 4) Sharing Insights (All participants) 5) Praise Song 6) Making a Narrative of the Kingdom of God (Making communal testimony based on what they have shared together) 7) Proclamation of the Coming of God's Kingdom 8) Praise Song 9) Planning what they will accomplish over the coming week 10) Prayer of Agape C. Closing 1) A Closing Speech (Luke 28:28-30) 2) Response (Communal Prayer) 3) Closing Song
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An Example of Hongdae Young People Church's Agape

The 1st Part: Meal	Invitation of Love	One of the members prepares the invitation for the worship participants.
	Communion	The pastor leads the communion with the elements of the meal that is prepared for the Agape.
	Prayer of Love	A member of the community prepares a representative prayer.
	Dining	Dining together
Break	Clean Up the Table	Cleaning up the table and preparing the table for the libation (beverage and dessert) together.

The 2nd Part: Libation	Libation	Ethic of Libation (Renew attitude and mindset as they participate in the libation)
	Gratitude and News	As they enjoy the beverage and dessert, they share what they have been grateful for during the past week and share some news.
	Offering and Hugging	A member of the community prepares a song that she or he would like the community to listen to together. While listening to the music, they give each other a hug and say “thank you” for your effort during the past week.
	Prayer of Love	Communal Prayer
	Reading the Bible	Representative person reads the bible passage.
	Sharing Message	The pastor shares the message.
	Reflection	The participants discuss what they have learned from the message and why it has been an important lesson for them. They also share practical plans that they intend to accomplish during the upcoming week.
	Communal Benediction	As they pray a communal prayer together, they encourage one another.

APPENDIX IV: PICTURES OF AGAPE



[Sharing the Meal and Worshipping Together]



[The Libation Follows the Meal-centered Service]

APPENDIX V: EXAMPLES OF THE COMMUNAL STATEMENT (SHARED-NARRATIVE)

On the week of “Rebuilding the Church” (January 16, 2022)
What type of church am I? “I am a church which I forget what I have to do.” “I am a church that delays what I planned.” “I am a lazy church.” What actions can I take in order to change my behavior? “I will make a habit of taking notes on what I need to accomplish.” “I will make plans and take action.” “I will read the Bible to refresh myself on how I will live today.” I will not live like a fig tree without fruit. As of this moment, I will live with joy, gratitude, and choose the path of Christ.

On the week of “Life” (February 11, 2022)
Children who are precious regardless of what they do and who give us great pleasure regardless of the circumstances. In the same way that mothers' hearts love their children as they watch them as they are, through sharing today's Agape message, we are grateful to be able to look back on how we regard and approach each other. In the same way as mothers love their children, we will love and look at each other admirably, and we will like them.

APPENDIX VI: EXAMPLES OF INVITATION TO THE MEAL TABLE

An Invitation to the Table (February 23, 2022)

My baby was hospitalized and treated last week, and now she has been discharged from the hospital as she is well enough to be treated at home. In the week that I spent caring for my infant, I did not have time to eat a meal.

In that situation, my church family sent me a gift. The moment I received a gift of food, I was able to fully experience the love contained within it.

I invite Christs, who embody the influences of love in their presence, to the table of love.

An Invitation to the Table (March 9, 2022)

Throughout the day, I spent a variety of time. I have worked hard, had an emotional disagreement with someone, and occasionally laughed.

However, while living such a life, I sometimes become confused as to what I am doing. The reason I am able to determine the direction of my life is that I have a family that acknowledges me whenever we eat together.

My gratitude and the preciousness for this experience will never be forgotten, and I will consider it an entirely new experience every time.

I invite each of you, who have gathered to find yourself, to the table of love.

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